

# TL Infobits - January 2007

Issue 7

ISSN: 1931-3144

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## ONLINE EDUCATION TRENDS

"Making the Grade: Online Education in the United States, 2006" is the fourth annual report on the state of online learning in U.S. higher education conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group and the Sloan Consortium. The report, based on responses from over 2,200 colleges and universities, addresses these questions:

- Has the growth of online enrollments begun to plateau?
- Who is learning online?
- What types of institutions have online offerings?
- Have perceptions of quality changed for online offerings?
- What are the barriers to widespread adoption of online education?

For more information or to download the complete report, go to [http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/survey/pdf/making\\_the\\_grade.pdf](http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/survey/pdf/making_the_grade.pdf).

The Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is a consortium of institutions and organizations committed "to help learning organizations continually improve quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines." Sloan-C is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. For more information, see <http://www.sloan-c.org/>.

For a related article, see:

"The Invisible Professor and the Future of Virtual Faculty"

By Martha C. Sammons, Wright State University, and Stephen Ruth, George Mason University

*International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning* January 2007

[http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan\\_07/article01.htm](http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan_07/article01.htm)

"Although the online teaching continues to grow in popularity, it places greater demands on faculty than traditional courses. The Sloan report found that this problem exists at all levels of postsecondary education, from doctoral-granting institutions to community colleges. A significant number of full-time professors are thus understandably reluctant to participate in distance learning, and faculty questions about online teaching continue. Traditional professors are disappearing from online classrooms as distance learning has altered their roles and

responsibilities, as well as their professional status, job security, workload, rewards, and intellectual freedom. This article delineates some of the most significant challenges and suggests that distance learning has created new questions about the future of virtual faculty."

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## **2007 HORIZON REPORT ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**

The 2007 Horizon Report is a collaboration between the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative that "seeks to identify and describe emerging technologies likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning, or creative expression within higher education." Some key trends that the report calls attention to include

- Increasing globalization is changing the way we work, collaborate, and communicate.
- Information literacy increasingly should not be considered a given.
- Academic review and faculty rewards are increasingly out of sync with new forms of scholarship.
- The notions of collective intelligence and mass amateurization are pushing the boundaries of scholarship.
- Students' views of what is and what is not technology are increasingly different from those of faculty.

The complete report is available at  
[http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2007\\_Horizon\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2007_Horizon_Report.pdf).

The New Media Consortium (NMC) is an "international 501(c)3 not-for-profit consortium of nearly 200 leading colleges, universities, museums, corporations, and other learning-focused organizations dedicated to the exploration and use of new media and new technologies." For more information, go to <http://www.nmc.org/>.

The EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) is a "strategic initiative of EDUCAUSE. While EDUCAUSE serves those interested in advancing higher education through technology, ELI specifically explores innovative technologies and practices that advance learning." For more information, go to [http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?Section\\_ID=86](http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?Section_ID=86).

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## **SOCIAL SOFTWARE IN EDUCATION**

The growing popularity of social software (e.g., instant messaging, blogs, wikis, Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube) among college students raises questions on how can these tools be used to support instruction. Here are some resources that address the topic and/or provide background information on the tools.

"Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview"  
Pew Internet & American Life Project report  
[http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/198/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/198/report_display.asp)

"More than half (55%) of all online American youths ages 12-17 use online social networking sites, according to a new national survey of teenagers conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The survey also finds that older teens, particularly girls, are more likely to use these sites. For girls, social networking sites are primarily places to reinforce pre-existing friendships; for boys, the networks also provide opportunities for flirting and making new friends."

"Digital Rendezvous: Social Software in Higher Education"

*EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research*

*Research Bulletin*, vol. 2007, issue 2, January 16, 2007

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ERB0702>

(Registration required to access this report.)

"The origins of social software -- from blogs to facebooks to instant messaging to wikis -- are firmly based in the information technologies of the past few decades. This research bulletin explores the genesis of some of the current social software products, helps define common characteristics, describes how the software is being used in higher education, and examines the implications for activities in colleges and universities."

The EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative's "7 Things You Should Know About..."

(<http://www.educause.edu/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutSeries/7495>) series

provides concise information on emerging learning technologies including briefings on

YouTube

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7018>

Facebook

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7017>

Instant Messaging

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7008>

Blogs

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7006>

Wikis

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7004>

Social Bookmarking

<http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI7001>

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## ARE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES STILL NECESSARY?

"Conventional wisdom among college and university students (and many of their parents) in early 2007 is that "everything needed for research is available free on the Web." Therefore, academic libraries are often viewed as costly dinosaurs--unnecessary expenses in today's environment. This idea is uninformed at best and foolish at worst."

In "If the Academic Library Ceased to Exist, Would We Have to Invent It?"

(*EDUCAUSE Review*, vol. 42, no. 1, January/February 2007, pp. 6-7) Lynn Scott

Cochrane argues that "if college and university libraries and librarians didn't exist, we would certainly have to invent--better yet, re-invent--them." The article is available at <http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/erm07/erm0714.asp>.

*EDUCAUSE Review* [ISSN 1527-6619], a bimonthly print magazine that explores developments in information technology and education, is published by EDUCAUSE (<http://www.educause.edu/>). Articles from current and back issues of *EDUCAUSE Review* are available on the Web at <http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/>.

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## Recommended Reading

"Recommended Reading" lists items that have been recommended to me or that *Infobits* readers have found particularly interesting and/or useful, including books, articles, and websites published by Infobits subscribers. Send your recommendations to [kotlas@email.unc.edu](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu) for possible inclusion in this column.

*Infobits* subscriber Arun-Kumar Tripathi ([arun.tripathi@waoe.org](mailto:arun.tripathi@waoe.org)) recommends *Democratizing Technology: Building on Andrew Feenberg's Critical Theory of Technology*, edited by Tyler J. Veak (SUNY Press, 2006; ISBN: 0-7914-6918-2 pbk).

The book is a festschrift honoring Feenberg, who is Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology, School of Communication at Simon Fraser University.

"Largely because of the Internet and the new economy, technology has become the buzzword of our culture. But what is it, and how does it affect our lives? More importantly, can we control and shape it, or does it control us? In short, can we make technology more democratic? Using the work of Andrew Feenberg, one of the most important and original figures in the field of philosophy of technology, as a foundation, the contributors to this volume explore these important questions and Feenberg responds."

You can preview portions of the book online through Google Books: <http://books.google.com/>.

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## INFOBITS SUBSCRIBERS -- WHERE WERE WE IN 2006?

Each January issue of *Infobits* includes an annual subscriber tally listing the countries represented by our subscribers. At the end of 2006, there were 7,422 subscribers. Here are some brief statistics about our current subscribers.

The majority of the subscribers we could identify by country are in the United States (3,516) and other English-speaking countries: Canada (442), Australia (265), and the United Kingdom (162).

Each of the following countries has between eleven and forty-two subscribers: Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden.

Each of the following countries has 10 or fewer subscribers: Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia,

Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Macedonia, Mauritius, Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Phillipines, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yugoslavia.

In addition to subscribers whom we can positively identify by a geographic location, the following sites don't have a geographic designation: 1,696 subscribers from commercial (.com) sites, 192 subscribers from .org sites, and 625 subscribers from .net sites.

Many thanks to all the subscribers for your support in 2006!

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### Contact Information

[Carolyn Kotlas](#)

*Infobits* Editor

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