



Digital Bridges

Building Bridges Between Teaching and Technology

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Podcasting: Taking Lectures *Outside* the Classroom

by Eric LePage

Students' multi-tasking abilities are stronger today than ever before - and why not? They are the MTV Nintendo Generation, and they've grown up with technology at their fingertips - literally. Mobile tools like laptops, cell phones, PDAs, and iPods allow students to take their technology with them wherever they go. Now they're using these tools in parallel, which could mean that they're doing schoolwork on their laptops while using their cell phones to listen to music, occasionally switching over to take a phone call from a friend. With the technological means of communicating with students greater than ever before, how can educators take advantage of these technologies and students' multi-tasking abilities in the classroom?

An emerging technology trend

that is finding its way into the classroom is the podcasting phenomenon. Podcasts are digital audio recordings of radio programs, book and poetry readings, lectures, and more that can be listened to on a computer or on a portable music device (such as an iPod) at any time. Unlike the static posting of an audio recording to a web site or a Blackboard course site, the latest recordings of a particular podcast can be delivered right to a computer without human initiative. This is all accomplished through the concept of podcast subscriptions.

Mail subscriptions to popular magazines have always been an easy, efficient way for readers to get the latest issues of their favorite publications delivered right to their mailboxes without having to venture out to local bookstores or supermarkets. Podcasts work in a similar manner. Individuals subscribe to

a podcast of interest, such as the NPR daily news, *All Things Considered*, or specialized shows such as the saltwater fish program *Talking Reef*, and then each time a new audio recording has been created, the recording is immediately downloaded to a "podcatcher" program such as iTunes or jPodder on the computer. These audio files are stored for perpetual on demand listening, either on a notebook or desktop computer, on an MP3 player, or burnt to a CD that can be listened to during the morning commute! There are literally thousands and thousands of podcast programs on any topic imaginable to choose from.

Creating Podcasts is simple and inexpensive. I was able to create a podcast recording of this article using only my notebook-computer, a free audio recording program called Audac-

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Managing Your Blackboard Course Menu

by Anne Hird

Did you know that you can control which Blackboard menu buttons and course tools are available to students in your course? For example, if you never use the course calendar tool, you can disable the menu button for this tool, so that it does not appear on the student's screen. Early semester is a good time to review your

Blackboard course website to make sure that the menu is organized in the most efficient way for student use.

In the instructor's **Control Panel**, the **Course Options** section includes tools that can be used to increase the efficiency of your course website. If you click on **Manage Course Menu**, you will find that you have the option to change the

order of menu buttons, disable menu buttons for tools that you do not plan to use, and even create new menu buttons to give students direct access to frequently used course tools.

A good place to start is to click on the **Remove** button next to any tools that you do not use in your course. Next, review the remaining items on the list. Is

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Podcasts can be listened to on your desktop, notebook or on portable mp3 player.

**Download the
podcast
recording of this
article at**

[http://it.bridgew.edu/
FacStaff/ttc_news/
podcast.mp3](http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/ttc_news/podcast.mp3)

Podcasting *continued*

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ity, and a \$20 Logitech USB desktop microphone. Once the recording was complete, I saved the file to my BSC Webhost folder and used a free online service called Feedburner.com to create a subscription web link that I can distribute to anyone wishing to listen to my podcast recording and any future recordings I create.

The question remains, what value can podcasts have in academia? One obvious benefit is for distance learning classes. Since there are few, if any, in-class lectures, instructors could record short audio lectures which students could subscribe to, thereby receiving the recorded lecture as soon as it was complete.

Distance learning classes aren't the only outlet for this technology, though. Faculty at Purdue University are recording their in-class lectures in history, science, business classes and other disciplines so that their

students can review the lectures again on their own time, either for reinforcement or to pick up on anything they may have missed in class.

English and Communication classes are another great outlet for podcasts. Instructors can record poetry readings and speeches so that students can hear where emphasis and intonations are placed. What about Foreign Language podcasts to help reinforce proper pronunciation? The possibilities are seemingly endless.

The Teaching and Technology Center will be holding special seminars on podcasting this semester. However, if you are unable to attend, TTC Staff can perform a personal tutorial for you at your convenience. Please call 508.531.2634 to set up an appointment.

You can download the Podcast recording of this article at http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/ttc_news/podcast.mp3.

Resources

There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education - <http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/erm05/erm0561.asp?bhcp=1>

Purdue Plans Academic Podcasts - http://www.podcastingsnews.com/archives/2005/08/purdue_plans_ac.html

Audacity - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

iTunes - <http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>

iPodder - <http://www.ipodder.com/>

Feedburner - <http://www.feedburner.com/fb/home>

Managing Your Blackboard Course Menu *continued*

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there anything that you want students to have easy access to, but which is not listed on your menu? If so, go to the **Add** toolbar toward the top of the screen and select the type of menu button you wish to add. For example, you could create a menu button that links directly to the Maxwell Library website by clicking on the **External Link** option on the **Add** toolbar and then typing in the name and URL for the Maxwell site.

Finally, use the dropdown numbers to the left of each menu item to determine the order in which the menu buttons will appear on the course website. Usually, it is best to place at the top of the menu the buttons linking to tools and content areas that students will need most often. As with all websites, your Blackboard course site is a dynamic "work in progress" and can be revised anytime. Although the menu should be kept relatively con-

stant, you might want to make mid-semester updates, e.g. add a menu button that links to group pages when students begin work on a late-semester group project.

Learn more about this and other Blackboard course management strategies in the upcoming *Moving Your Course Online* workshop series. For more information, see the TTC Spring schedule at <http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/calendar/index.cfm>.

To view changes in the course

Add Content Area

1 Announcements
Announcements

2 Syllabus
Content Area

The Manage Course Menu window lets you add and remove menu buttons as well as reorder menu contents.

Teaching and Technology Spotlight: Dan Cooney and the Art of Blogging

by Aimee McAlpine & Dan Cooney

Blog . . . it sounds more like an artifact from Harry Potter's world than one of the hottest technology tools available. Lately, blogs have received mainstream recognition in the news, and are slowly gaining acceptance as a pedagogical tool in higher education. But what exactly is a blog?

A blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog.

www.conceptwebsites.comSEO/common-terms.htm

The term weblog was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2003. While new to the dictionary, weblogs have been in existence for over a decade. They are quickly becoming a means of communication for ideas, opinions, and information. Blogs run the gamut of political, personal, corporate and educational uses. Bridgewater State College art professor, Dan Cooney, incorporated blogs in his Two-Dimensional Design course during the fall semester. In his own words, Dan describes his blogging experiences.

This fall, my Two-Dimensional Design students incorporated their notebook computers into the classroom by creating personal web logs, also known as "Blogs." Through the experience they became more familiar with both notebook computer technology and with the two dimensional design material we covered during the semester.

The class was introduced to blogging during the third week of the semester by having each student go to the Google home page and create a free blog. Their first assignment was to choose a design template and explain why they chose that particular design using some of the design terminology we had gone over in class. Following that, with the help of one of our more computer savvy students, we learned how to establish links to each other's blogs, enabling us to quickly view what others had posted. Later, as each student posted their art work and written assignments they were encouraged to view and comment on the work of their classmates. While we continued to hold group discussions and critiques in class, having the work available on line has proven to be useful and convenient as a way to catalog and review.

One assignment that I thought worked particularly well was when we visited the Anderson Gallery with our computers in tow. Each student was asked to respond to the art work on exhibit by writing a short review and posting it. The technology helped allow the writing to be more intuitively responsive, immediate and fun.

All in all I think having introduced the notebook computer into my classroom in this way has been extremely beneficial to the students. Anyone interested can view our blogs by going to <http://bsc2d.blogspot.com>. From there you can see the others by connecting through the links.

As evidenced through the work of the Two-Dimensional Design students, blogs have the capability to extend the classroom community beyond class time and engage students in reflection upon one another's work, deepening understandings of course content. If you are interested in learning more about blogs contact the Teaching and Technology Center at 508.531.2634



Dan Cooney's Two Dimensional Art students use their notebooks to author blog entries while at the Anderson Art Gallery.

Resources

More Information:
Weblogs: A History and Perspective by Rebecca Blood http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html

Blogs in Education blog (<http://awd.cl.uh.edu/blog/>).

Create A Blog (for free):
Blogger (www.blogger.com)

Live Journal (<http://www.livejournal.com/>)

Bloglines (<http://www.bloglines.com/>)

Dan Cooney will be facilitating a Brown Bag Lunch on March 2, 2006 from 11:45 am-1:15 pm in ECC 113. He will discuss his use of blogger and notebooks more extensively. This is one in a series of Brown Bags being sponsored by the Teaching and Technology Center. To view the full schedule of Brown Bag Luncheons and other TTC Seminar offerings, go to:

<http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/calendar/index.cfm>



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We're on the web!
[http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/
index.cfm](http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/index.cfm)

Element K: The Online Training Solution

by Stacey Osborn

Learn what you need, when you need it with just-in-time, self-paced training through Element K, the College's new online training environment for faculty and staff.

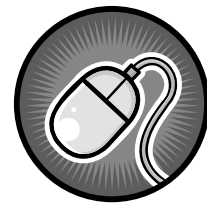
Element K offers self-passed training modules for a variety of Office Productivity and Design and Media topics such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, FrontPage, Dreamweaver, Flash, Java and many more applications.

Element K can be accessed anytime, anyplace you have internet access at <http://www.elementk.com/login.asp>. Easily search through the available training content to select a single training module or complete an entire class for professional development.

Assessments accompany all training modules. Hence, if you are already familiar with a topic, you can take the assessment before beginning

the class. This enables you to engage in only the modules you actually need.

Access login information and learn more about ElementK at <http://it.bridgew.edu/FacStaff/elementk/>.



Some of the Best Free Educational Sites on the Web

compiled by Adam Tavares

[Turning the Pages, the British Library](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html) [<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html>]

Browse one of Leonardo DaVinci's sketchbooks, Lewis Carol's manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Underground*, Mercator's *Atlas of Europe*, Andreas Vesalius' study of human anatomy, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, and ten other historical documents as high-resolution, full-color scans of the original documents.

[MathWorld](http://mathworld.wolfram.com) [<http://mathworld.wolfram.com>]

Wolfram Research, the developers of the well-respected Mathematica software suite, hosts and maintains MathWorld, a collection of topical web pages encompassing nearly all fields of mathematics, encyclopedic in scope, and an excellent reference for anyone learning or working with mathematics. The site is hierarchically organized and easily navigable.

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[Internet Archives](http://www.archive.org) [<http://www.archive.org>]

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