

Semester without End

Keeping the Connection Open via Web 2.0

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Foundation Definitions

Web 2.0 - *Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.* - **Tim O'Reilly**

RSS - *RSS (which, in its latest format, stands for "Really Simple Syndication") is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts. An RSS document, which is called a "feed", "web feed", or "channel", contains either a summary of content from an associated web site or the full*

text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favorite web sites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. [Wikipedia](#) i.e. [Google Reader](#) IE7, Firefox, Opera, Safari, etc.

[Web 2.0 - Big App on Campus](#) - C|Net News July 31, 2007

The Concept

- Students who have completed a class and entered the workforce (or on to further study) can add value and perspectives to current students taking the class.
 - New content may be produced in many classes that is of successive value to students who have completed the class.
 - Students currently taking the class value the networking opportunity with those who have graduated and entered the field.
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define: [Learning Community](#)

The Big Three

Blog - *postings by the instructor/students in class are shared via RSS with former students who comment on the postings - adding value and perspective.* [[Blogs in Education](#)]

Podcast - *podcasts by the instructor or students are shared via RSS with former students who may comment on an associated blog or wiki.* [[Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education](#)]

Wiki - *class wiki is shared with former students who are able to contribute to the evolving documents.* [[Using Wiki in Education](#)] [[A Wiki Book: Using Wiki in Education](#)]

Design - must engage two groups of users. One group (the current students) has a more obvious incentive (final grade). The second group (those who have completed the class) must find value:

- intrinsic value of supporting those students who follow them
- extrinsic value of new information, potential recruitment

Goal - Extending the learning community beyond the classroom - even beyond the electronic classroom. Engaging and including those who have completed the class as well as

others who have an interest in the topic and the application of the class materials in the work environment.

Developing Case Study - I publish three daily blogs:

- [Online Learning Update](#) (#2 in Google/#1 in Yahoo for *online learning*)
- [Educational Technology](#) (#2 in Google/#1 in Yahoo)
- [Techno-News](#)

These blogs are daily readings among the assignments for students in the *Internet and American Life* course I teach online each term.

Buttons included in course navigation panel in [UIS BlackBoard](#).

Tracking subscribers:

- Web site visitors through [Site Meter](#)
- RSS feed readers through [FeedBurner](#)
- eMail readers through [FeedBurner](#)
- Note the much heavier access through RSS

Discussion

- Are we aware of other formal or informal examples of this?
- How can this be applied in other classes and disciplines?

Does it work best with "news" topics? Other topics?

How does one engage the busy graduates in interaction?

- What does this **mean** for the **meaning** of the "semester"?
- How does this intersect with cross-institutional collaboration?
- What are the implications of extending the faculty/student relationship over years rather than semesters?
- Can the nature of formal education change from a slice of time to a much longer continuum marked by expanding and lasting learning communities?

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