

Nothing But Net:

The Internet, Learning & the Future of Schools

by Ian Jukes and Ted McCain

Synopsis:

The Internet has arrived. Overnight, Cyberspace has exploded into public consciousness, moved from geekhood to coolness and become a middle class suburb. The rampant growth in Internet access and the diversity of services available is leading to fundamental structural changes in our society. What does this all mean for schools? What does it mean for classrooms? What does it mean for teachers? What does it mean for students? And particularly, what does it mean to the future of learning?

This provocative presentation gets participants to step back from it all and asks them to answer several critical questions about who we are, where we're going, and what this will mean for each of us.

Gee whiz - the Internet!

- what's this presentation all about
- it's about looking at the Internet from the broader context of instructional delivery
- what do we teach kids?
- what is our focus?
- what do we assume they learn?
- how will the Internet impact this

Attributes of Industrial Age schools

- full frontal lecturing - student as vessel - memorize paper-based, theoretical, content rich curriculum

The early days of the Net

- focus on technolust & techno drool
- pre-occupation with surfing
- pre-occupation visiting home pages
- focus on entertainment & edutainment
- flash not substance
- widespread tolerance for questionable content
- low level thinking was all that was needed
- initially the Internet was only accessed by the priesthood - those who could speak in technological tongues so most teachers have either ignored it or dismissed it

Looks can be deceiving

- Internet developers initially focused on medium rather than message
- the graphical Internet was intentionally designed to appeal to the Nintendo generation

But it's not what it seems

- the developers understand native language of kids who are a multimedia generation - raised on TV - who understand hypertext - who have been raised on interactive experiences that have moved from linear, logical sequential left to right, top to bottom beginning to end access to a new mindset that encourages the development of dynamic personal pathways that allow students to follow cognitive links as they develop
- this is a delivery model that is potentially far more relevant to students than traditional classroom delivery, but you ain't seen nuthin' yet....

The dynamic duo!

- we are now seeing the emergence of on-line learning experiences that include edited, reliable text sources complete with sound, graphics & full motion video
- the dynamic duo is content married to the capabilities of the Internet & WWW as delivery vehicles
- this represents a fundamental shift in the concept of informational delivery and a powerful new educational and instructional medium
- all of this has all flown below personal radar of most educators because initially it was devoid of useful content and required users to understand the special language of the priesthood
- but this is not the case anymore - and just because your colleagues are not aware of it or resistant to it doesn't mean that this shift isn't happening

Age of disintermediation

- technology fundamentally transforming delivery of product & services - it allows consumers direct access to source of product or service and removes those who are intermediaries in process - this is disintermediation - some examples:

Jeans are us- www.levi.com

- let's look at the Levi Strauss home page allows virtual shopping for custom fit personal pair jeans using the magic of an order button & robotic production lines - a pair of jeans designed specifically for you in 2 weeks - soon in 3 days asking who needs the bricks and mortar of a store when you can get it on line? What value do the stores bring that will compel you to shop in person rather than virtually? If not, who gets disintermediated?

The auto industry - www.chrysler.com

- let's look at the Chrysler home page where we can go virtual shopping for car using the magic of an order button & robotic production line - again, who needs bricks and mortar when you can go out for a quote or order a car on line. what value do dealerships bring that will compel you to wander from car lot to car lot when the Internet can do the walking for you. If not, guess who gets disintermediated?

The music industry - www.thegoodguys.com

- let's look at the Tower Records home page - let's go out and listen to clips from the new Hootie album - in the near future, let's go virtual shopping for the album and then download it to our computer, CD or tape player using the magic of an order button. Music is no longer atoms in the form of a CD or tape, it's moving to digitized bits of information traveling on the electronic highway - who needs tapes & CDs? If this happens, what value do record stores bring? And if they don't bring value, who gets disintermediated?

The newspaper industry - crayon.net

- let's look at the Crayon home page where you can go virtual shopping for news of your choice through the magic of customization - again, moving from atoms to bits - 30% of newspaper chains own cable TV companies - who needs paper-based newspapers & magazines when you can get them on-line? What value do news stands bring? Who gets disintermediated? What happens to paper boys, truck drivers, loading bay workers, loggers, logging truck drivers, and pressmen?

The information industry

- it should be clear that if you are in an information delivery business and have not embraced the Internet. you are seriously at risk of occupational disintermediation

So what about schools? school.discovery.com - www.cnet.com

- schools have been immune to change forever - they have been a virtual monopoly so when we talk about disintermediation, educators always think that this happens to someone else - educators suffer from diminishing astonishment as they have watched educational reforms come & go - they've seen it all before - they figure that all they have to do is just duck down & it will pass us by
- so what's the point you might ask? Education has traditionally been an information delivery business

with a focus on content - so where's the competition? Is the Internet a serious threat to what we do? Look no further than school.discovery.com or www.cccnet.com

Who's being disintermediated?

- the potential for informational & instructional delivery by Internet represents first significant challenge to education in more than 100 years - most don't see this (yet) but if you are a content focused instructor you are seriously at risk

What does this mean?

- education is a value added endeavor - the Internet will force educators to clearly articulate the value they add to process - why should kids come to school when they can learn at home? what value is it that you add?

Never happen?????

- What is the largest growth sector in education in North America today? – alternate schooling - it is now 25% of the student population and this is without access to Internet learning
- when you combine this trend with the emergence of telecommuters & the hoffice and note that the number of people working out of the home has risen from 23% to 42% in 10 years - and combine this with growing concerns about quality of public schooling & personal safety - what do you think - will number of home schoolers go down, stay same, or go up? Home schooling is projected to reach 20% by 2000.... and who knows what beyond that?
- will those who are dissatisfied with public education be interested in the next generation of instructional services that will be provided on the Internet? this is a recipe for disaster - and if this doesn't frighten you, perhaps you should check your pulse

What's happening is bigger than education

- we're talking about potentially the death of the public school system as we know it, the re-birth of British school system, and a future that includes educational apartheid with an increasing gap between have & have nots - know & know nots
- democracy at risk which is a toxic recipe for social upheaval

Don't be a yabbut!

- need to acknowledge that this really happening - like it or not, there's no turning back - the power of Internet to deliver instruction and to transform education is enormous

Where do we start?

- the Internet is not a threat if we add value of higher level thinking to educational process. We need to embrace: the Internet as a friend not foe - we need to embrace the shift from content to process based curriculum, we need to embrace the teaching of effective information literacy skills

Where do we start?

- by teaching of effective problem solving skills in a real world context
- by embracing the concept of students as clients
- by becoming passionate evangelists for the preservation of public education
- by providing compelling arguments to our colleagues for why they can & must embrace change
- by convincing our clients of the value of public education
- by recognizing that you can ignore this advice only at your own peril

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