# Book Review: Looking Toward the Future of Technology-Enhanced Education

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This book is edited by Martin Ebner of Graz University of Technology in Austria and Mandy Schiefner of University of Zurich in Zwitzerland. It was published in 2010 by IGI Global (Information Science Reference), Hershey, PA. The book has 526+xxx pages. The ISDN of the book is: 978-1-61520-679-7.

A total of 49 authors from 9 different countries have contributed to the book, mostly from Germany and Austria along with those from United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, United States, Canada, and Australia.

This book stands witness to the fervors globally of the current stage of technical rationality characterized by a focus on enrollments, reorganization into consortia, followed by the value-added services of social networking and ubiquitous online learning.

The book is organized in five sections. First section is an introduction and opens up with the chapter that basically draws the contours of discussions and theoretical assumptions evolve throughout the book. Therefore, a detailed summary of the chapter one is presented below, believing that would illuminate the reader about the book.

In *section one*, the authors challenge the question of how new media be placed into cultural context. Scholars discussed the role of futurology in new media adoption in order to come up with arguable consequences. Nonetheless, new media adoption means cultural connotations. Although there is no "good" or "bad" culture, however from our western perspective, some of us adopt innovations quicker than others, and that explains why culture is so important? From authors' point of view, we are now entering into a new era in teaching and learning. This era is called as "mediosphere." The concept of mediosphere represents the oral culture, and that is reasonably weird for some of us. Their standing point is interesting though, given the fact that all of our so called "cumulative knowledge" had only became available to vast number of people by the invention of printing, thanks to Gutenberg. After all, what we had learned so far, mostly from nowhere but from books.

Traditional learning system requires books, printing houses, schools and so forth. This is a vicious circle that reproduced itself. Obviously, this system puts the mediator at epicenter for research. As the authors say, "not the media systems themselves are in the focus of research, instead the mediations are." All of the hypotheses are arguable to some extent. However, one thing is for sure: We are going to consume our own harvest of knowledge but then again would there be education or do we need to be educated?

*Section two* emphasizes learners and teachers, both as agents for interaction, and enhancing learning environment. Second chapter of this section brings rather fascinating arguments to our attention. According to the authors, despite the "band wagon" of Internet, e-learning and Web 2.0 praising, notably research findings indicate some of the common beliefs may not always be showing us the right direction. The researcher addresses some of the so-called *a priori* assumptions:

- Media activities of youth are reviewed one-sidedly, deliberately disregarding the fact that youth are active in clubs, gyms, and other places where they spend their leisure time.

- Majority of youth use social media as a form of communication, not for learning.

- Significant proportions of studies are based on accidental and relatively small sample groups. They are incapable of making generalizations on youths' actual behaviors.

- Most net generation authors assume the behavior of youth is determined by the existence of digital media. There is no substantial evidence that youth transfers their Internet experience into their study competences and learning preferences. The author stressed that result of this study indicates no significant correlation between youths' Internet use and reflecting the experience they gathered over to their learning patterns.

Chapter three in the second section focuses on improving secondary school teachers' media literacy and media skills. Authors argue that secondary school teachers are not keeping up with so-called "digital natives". This new generation has much hands-on experience on computers and other mobile devices. Therefore, their teachers must keep themselves up to date, if they want to further their roles of not only being teachers but also being educational leaders. Scholars conclude that developing their media literacy and competencies will be sufficient for teacher. They should also adopt the behavior of learning with their students. Ubiquitous learning becomes a new dimension for everyone.

*Section three* examines the learning context. In this part of the book, authors discuss the socio-cultural, legal spheres of learning environment. Chapter five in this section further emphasizes the need for human rights based e-learning programs. Chapter six proposes that service learning is the key for future of youth learning. The author stresses that new learning technologies should be deployed for helping students to gain social skills. Chapter seven in this section argues that we are the inhabitants of a ubiquitous world. Our very self and conscious are no longer must stay together, rather we learn while we talk or on vacation. Author notes that this new era lays a new pedagogical road ahead of us.

*The fourth section* of the book involves "new horizons" for learning. The theme of this section is to bring how student learn while they play question to our attentions. Chapter nine discusses that it is a compelling idea of educators, developers, and researchers to utilize gaming technology for educational purposes. Authors classify mainly three types of games for educational purposes, *mini games* for young children for preschool age children, *simulation games* that are basically pursue a drill and practice approach to certain strategic or tactical skills, and *off-the shelf games* are the games that can be purchased. Authors note that all three types are commonly utilized for educational purposes. Chapter ten focuses on augmented reality (AR) serious games. Authors conclude that AR games can help player learn and solve problems while playing the game better than other types of gaming environments. Chapter twelve in this section brings the "Generation Me" concept into our attentions. Authors argue

that we are facing a new generation of learners. Their learning patterns are significantly different than previous generations. Their motivational factor is to provide to them a learning environment that asks authentic tasks from this generation of learners. Authors describe the *authentic task* concept as duties when fulfilling them one requires use of cognitive, affective, conative, and psychomotor abilities.

*Section five* of the book is devoted to learning technologies. The section itself is divided into three sub-sections. 1. Mobile Learning. 2. Use of Collaboration Tools. 3. Virtual environments and Virtual Worlds.

Chapter thirteen of the first sub-section involves the use of mobile devices and their effects for situation-oriented, personalized and collaborative learning. Authors contemplate on how learning theories should be reexamined under the cast of new lights and findings. Chapter fourteen revisits the notion of "digital natives". The author notes that by the forcible waves of change, mobile learning environment would best suits the needs of new generation of natives of our world.

The second sub-section of the last section of the book predominantly questions the use of collaborative tolls, namely *wikies* as of how they contribute learning environments. This sub-section is twofold. The first part favors the use of wikies for learning purposes. The second part however, discusses whether wikies corrupt the learning environments. In other words, do they do more harm than good? The decision is up to the reader at this point.

The last sub-section within the fifth section of the book is mainly devoted to the discussions on virtual learning environments on student learning, comparisons between physical versus virtual environments and their pros and cons, and use of multimedia in learning environments. This sub-section is a wrap-up of discussions in previous chapters and finally browses main issues for the reader.

As final words, this book is much concerned with how new technologies would be adapted to learning environments. Readers should not merely focus on to learn about new trends in educational technology, but how these new technologies will alter our lives. The book is beyond the brick and mortar mentality of ours, it's about life.

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