



NCTI 2009 Innovators Conference

Back to the Future

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Michael Levine, Executive Director, [Joan Ganz Cooney Center](#)

Lee Rainie, Director, [Pew Internet & American Life Project](#)

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Summary: Social media gurus discussed the power of Web 2.0 to unleash our latent creativity, support professional learning, and facilitate the culture of creation.

Discussion

Andy Carvin

- Social media has existed since the onset of the Internet. The first listserv and bulletin boards appeared in the 1970's; however, users needed technical literacy to use online social media early on. Social media has been commonly used for the past 10 years. Users can now concentrate on collaboration and communication – not just the technology. Many people now use Facebook, some are on Twitter and some use a blog.
- Social media is filtered in the classroom, but it has educational value by supporting constructivist learning.

Lee Rainie

- We need an agenda to drive social media research in education. Social media is designed to be useful in our personal lives, but we need to identify how it can be best used in the education setting.
- Son was born in 1990 and is a “digital native.” He has grown-up using the Internet and social media tools, and these are a part of his life.
- Recent stats tell us:
 - 87% teens use email. 60% of teens use desktops and laptops that they personally control.
 - 97% of teens play games.
 - 75% of teens have a cell phone, 90% of older teens have a cell phone.
 - 93% of teens use the Internet
 - 90% of teens use browsers for cloud computing functions.



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- 68% or more of teens use instant messaging. It is baked into the social media interface.
- 1/5 teens have PDAs/Blackberries.
- 14% of teens write blogs and 54% read blogs.
- 35% of online teens file share and 33% swap files.
- 40-50% of teens have DVRs.
- 55% of teens use Wikipedia.
- 74% of teens have MP3 player.
- 73% of online teens use social networking sites.
- 40-50% of teens tag content.
- 60-70% of teens have digital cameras.
- 50-60% post photos online (important social media activity).
- 25% of online teens have downloaded podcasts.
- 40% of teens have video cameras.
- 25% of have uploaded videos.
- 8% of teens use Twitter.
- 3% of adults use Kindle.
- Social media has caused students to be on alert to capture new information and to expect feedback. It has caused students to be more aware of outreach and worldly knowledge. Social media provides a platform for cross-discipline insights.

Steve Hargadon

- Classroom 2.0 is a social network of over 30,000 educators interested in using web 2.0 in the classroom.
- We are at the phase in social media where we need to determine what has pedagogical value and what does not. Example of what works: Teacher in Australia had musicians streaming into her classrooms to support a lesson on instruments.
- Social networking has increased participation among students. Students now have instant access to different networks. Social media allows students to transition from passive to active learners.

Michael Levine



- One billion searches are conducted with Google each day. Muppets appeared on the Google homepage to commemorate the 40 year anniversary of Sesame Street. If visitors clicked on a Muppet, they were taken to the Sesame Street website. This generated three million visitors a day to the Sesame Street website, with 1,600 click-ins per second. Two months of preparation were required for this. Sesame Street is present in 140 countries and local Muppets are listed internationally.
- 43 years ago, Joan Ganz Cooney issued the report, [*The Potential Uses of Television in Preschool Education*](#). Today, social media is the newest medium/technology of the day and educators need to think about how it can be used to teach social skills and basic skills while promoting 21st Century Literacy skills and intergroup understanding. In doing so, educators must consider how to best reach students who are underserved and those that have disabilities.
- Many teachers believe that digital skills are important, but don't know how to integrate them into the curriculum. Opportunity exists to use handheld devices and portable devices in the classroom, but we must overcome the perception that these are only social communication tools.
- Games can be used for learning and healthy development, but we must make them universally designed. We must also change the public framing that all games are violent and promote the educational aspect.
- [Debra Lieberman](#) at the University of California–Santa Barbara has done work on games-based learning and healthy development.
- The [Electric Company](#) now has a feature that enables users to create their own webisode using Electric Company materials.

Discussion and Q & A

Question: Will we reach the point when we can stop talking because everyone is using the social media?

- **Andy Carvin:** Technology continues to evolve and conversations continue on how to use tools in the classroom. Teachers are good at talking online.
- **Lee Rainie:** Digital media allows everyone to be participators. As we move toward that model, I have begun to hear about college level teachers and secondary teachers to know that they don't have to know everything. Teachers can give the assignment to students and say teach me.
- **Michael Levine:** Optimistic about technology use because kids are going to demand it. Level of engagement in school is the moat between the formal and informal classroom. Technology combined with capable directive activities will transform many more classrooms than we expect in the next 5 years.



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- **Andy Carvin:** What about the fact that students can't have cell phones and mobile devices in classrooms?
- **Michael Levine:** How long are they going to keep them out? I don't know what will tip the balance, but I contend it will be when we demonstrate real research results – they have value in the educational bottom line.
- **Lee Rainie:** One guarantee is that kids will become teachers themselves. For some teachers, social media is a burden that they have to master. Eventually, we'll see reform through attrition.
- **Steve Hargadon:** We look at the teacher and think it's related to the teacher. There are larger forces here. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania there is the Cyber-Charter. Is this making a difference? Yes. Other schools are building a building to "house" online students so they can keep the funding for daily students. Developers at Columbia State University created handheld device program on the Android. Practical solutions that address existing problems will be adopted. These are administrative decisions, not driven by the teacher.
- **Andy Carvin:** Historically, many creative teachers were good at not getting caught. They would work around the system. Utilizing mobile devices in the classroom, by any means necessary they would figure out how to teach the kids. When you look at discussions of teachers talking about best practices, do they seem to be working around the system and getting away with it?

Comment from Shelley McLaughlin, doctoral candidate, University at Buffalo: I am a research assistant on a project where we are trying to get teachers with no web experience to use [Ning](#) to create their own private network.

- **Steve Hargadon:** Technology facilitates teaching practices that have been ongoing. Natural assimilation of technologies fit constructivist teaching model.

Comment: Teaching has become so scripted, those who break it, are breaking the rules. Those who use technology are challenged with that and it becomes something extra that they have to do in addition to teaching the script. We have to stop teaching teachers to use technology and teach them how to learn from the technology.

- **Michael Levine:** If you embed media in an intentional way, you can make a very big difference. You're not teaching the technology you are embedding at the right moments. We're doing a lot of this work in early reading. Digital teacher core – beginning of preschool and early grades using modern media to change the course of teacher education programs across the country.
- **Andy Carvin:** Ning allows users to make their own walled garden environment. More educators are experimenting with "Do It Yourself" social networks. You don't have to worry about others coming in and distracting teachers.



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- **Steve Hargadon:** Ning is out of Palo Alto. There is a little bit of brilliance because you can create your own network. Moodle is a learning management system. Social networking activity often takes place outside of traditional school hours. Conversations on Classroom 2.0 tend to be target and related to education.

Comment from Donna McNear, consultant: I left being a career teacher for 32 years. We all know there is individual and organizational change. Much of the conversation has included how teachers need to change, but there are organizational barriers at the agency level. That is our challenge with the economic forces.

- **Lee Rainie:** Research has been done with tech-savvy teachers who were frustrated that they did not have access to technology in the classroom. There were a lot of teachers concerned about the digital divide because some kids didn't have access to the technology at home. This is a sensitive and real dilemma that may be addressed through learning groups and computer labs after school. Solutions can be distributed if kids are empowered.
- **Andy Carvin:** What is the role of the federal government in all of this?
- **Michael Levine:** We've written a lot of white papers on using the stimulus funds for innovation. The major role for the federal government involves research and development. Students are like the Jetsons in their learning, but we're like the Flintstones when understanding how they can learn. Research oriented shops need to fund understanding of learning and professional development.

Question from Vivian Tsang, Bloorview Kids Rehab: Why are there no questions about educational content? With social media, navigating technology is important, but so is the audience receiving content. Blurring line between speaker/listener, teacher/student.

- **Andy Carvin:** Strength is less about content delivery, not about content creation. Some might be kid-directed learning. The goal was that we wanted kids to improve literacy and critical thinking skills. As they created content about their community – all are able to critique. A conversation about the accuracy of the history of the community was created. It's hard to say who the audience is. It depends on every single lesson and project. You need to think about that as you design it.
- **Michael Levine:** What stands for evidence, what is expertise, how do we judge the value of the content? I come down on the side – if a surgeon is operating on me, he needs specialty knowledge. Maybe they can get crowd-sourcing advice. This is a fundamental question – core knowledge people and people who think we're going towards just skills. There is some happy medium. We don't want the sage on the stage approach anymore, but rather a powerful balance between expertise and learning.
- **Steve Hargadon:** I would compare it to this conference. You'll have some good hallway conversations that are really helpful, social media amplifies our ability to have hallway



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conversations. Discussion boards are not formal content, but helpful content. There is a range of teaching opportunity.

Comment from Eric Morrison, Pima Community College: I teach developmental reading at a community college and have a lot of students that have a learning disability or are deaf and bringing in a social media approach. I introduced [TakingItGlobal](#) in my teaching. But now, I'm getting resistance because students are required to read articles and check sites while using social media.

- **Andy Carvin:** TakingItGlobal was a volunteer activism social network with no formal educational component. It has 100,000 very active socially engaged students addressing issues they cared about in their own countries such as youth caucuses, IT policy and strategies in their countries. They don't do it for a grade because they cared about their topic. What do you do to get kids engaged? Does assigning a grade suck the life out of it?
- **Steve Hargadon:** I have a skin condition called Vitiligo and created a Ning around it. The network has exploded. I was thoughtful of how I portrayed this. It has the potential to be historic for addressing this disorder, for research, etc. We see potential for students to do this work. We want to convey opportunity for this kind of significant historical opportunity.
- **Michael Levine:** There are a lot of interesting examples of kids who are seen as professionals out of school but under-performing in school. Many kids of color are being assessed on standards that reflect the culture of others.
- **Lee Rainie:** At this moment, we know that this generation is oriented towards meritocracy and students perform for grades. That is a stick that can be brought to bear. Also, there is some magic in gaming that can be portable to the classroom experience. Stepping up levels, mastering levels of competence. Also, there are moments in the classrooms where students will be disengaged and bored. Being prepared for those moments is a way to enhance their experience.
- **Michael Levine:** After school time is important for programming.

Question from Richard Hoepfer, content developer: I'm curious about the architecture when considering the role of social media. How is the architecture distributed?

- **Andy Carvin:** A lot of schools are turning to free and open source tools. So much of what is happening in social media is open source.
- **Steve Hargadon:** [Jim Klein](#) of Saugus Union School District set up a basic framework for allowing students to participate in the social media environment. Administrators at the district level allowed for teachers to do this in the classroom.
- **Michael Levine:** Broadband policy in rural communities began with E-rate and extends technology so you have community housing where kids have access. The education community needs to get into these conversations in a much deeper way.



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- **Andy Carvin:** This is the education version of network neutrality debate. Does everyone have administrative rights? If you go down to the district level, how many educators who aren't part of the IT department have the rights to install software that will run or deactivate a filter? It is a matter of trust to give teachers the ability to develop the infrastructure without going around the system.
- **Michael Levine:** Some of the really successful charters have begun to integrate these infrastructures. This is a question for Karen Cantor, Linda Robert and architects of the National Educational Technology Plan.

Comment from George Koch, Advanced Distributed Learning Lab: At Florida Virtual High School, there is an after-school program with 16 learning management systems serving 1.6 million students. They are doing it and delivering content.

- **Steve Hargadon:** Florida Virtual School is working with FutureofEducation.com, which is funded by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and addresses a lot of these same issues.

Question from James Bickford, Portland State University: One thing that has bothered me is that students with disabilities haven't been brought up. I'm concerned that UDL is being left out of the design of social media tools. Students with disabilities will not have access to this type of technology. IDEA says we need to be more inclusionary, but unless universal design is adopted, we become more exclusionary.

- **Andy Carvin:** There are broader social networking trends where automation is taking place. There are ways in which social media opens doors. There is nothing tactile about the iPhone. Voices concerning UDL are an extreme minority.

Comment from Steven Yang, SUNY Cortland: Physical Education is adjusting to the needs of students. Runs blog on social media tools for physical education teacher candidates, <http://exergamelab.blogspot.com/>. Advocacy is important.

Question from Nancy Reder, NASDE: I understand that young teachers are familiar with technology, but with all of the requirements with ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) and others for teachers, there are none that address technology, so little opportunity exists for teachers to go out and pick up these skills. I wonder about teachers that have to go out and create coursework. I think it's great, but where are they going to find the time to pick-up skills?

- **Steve Hargadon:** The best adoption of social media tools is coming from older educators who have class management skills honed and have figured out how to weave it in.
- **Michael Levin:** There is not a choice here. Every other profession includes upgrading one's skills for the digital age. Teachers must be able to do this, too.