

Nothing But Net:

The Internet, Learning & the Future of Schools

by Ian Jukes & Ted McCain

© The InfoSavvy Group & Cystar, 2001

Synopsis

The Internet has arrived. Overnight, cyberspace has exploded into the public consciousness, moving the Web from geekhood to coolness - once the place for propeller heads and people who waxed their modems for higher speed, cyberspace has now become a middle class suburb. Whether we know it or not, the rampant growth in Internet access and the diversity of services available and coming is leading to fundamental structural changes in our society, What does this mean for schools? What does it mean for classrooms? What will it mean for teachers? What will it mean for students? This provocative presentation asks participants to go beyond Webdroll and ask some critical questions about the who, what when, where, why and how of learning.

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 - memorization paper-based, theoretical, content rich curriculum

The early days of the Net

- focus on technolust & technodroll
- 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

- 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 - 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?

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 circulation owned by 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.ccnnet.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 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.ccnnet.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? - home schooling - it is now 10% of the student population and this is without access to Internet learning
- when you combine this trend with the emergence of telecommuters & the home office and note that the number of people working out of the home has risen from 23% to 42% in 10 years - and

- 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 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 haves & 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

For further information, contact:

Ian Jukes, The InfoSavvy Group
 RR 2 S-24 C-2, Peachland, BC, Canada V0H 1X0
 (250) 767-2971 (Ian's home and messages)
 (250) 767-2945 (Ian's office/fax)
 Email: ijukes@mindspring.com
 Web sites: <http://www.ianjukes.com>

Ted McCain, Associate Director
 Thornburg Center for Professional Development
 26855 - 108th Avenue, Maple Ridge, BC, Canada V2W 1P4
 (604) 462-8586

© The InfoSavvy Group and Cystar, 2001

Copyright Policy: Materials published on The Committed Sardine web site may be duplicated in hard copy format for educational, non-profit school district use only and must include this copyright policy. All other uses, transmissions and duplications are prohibited unless permission has been expressly granted.