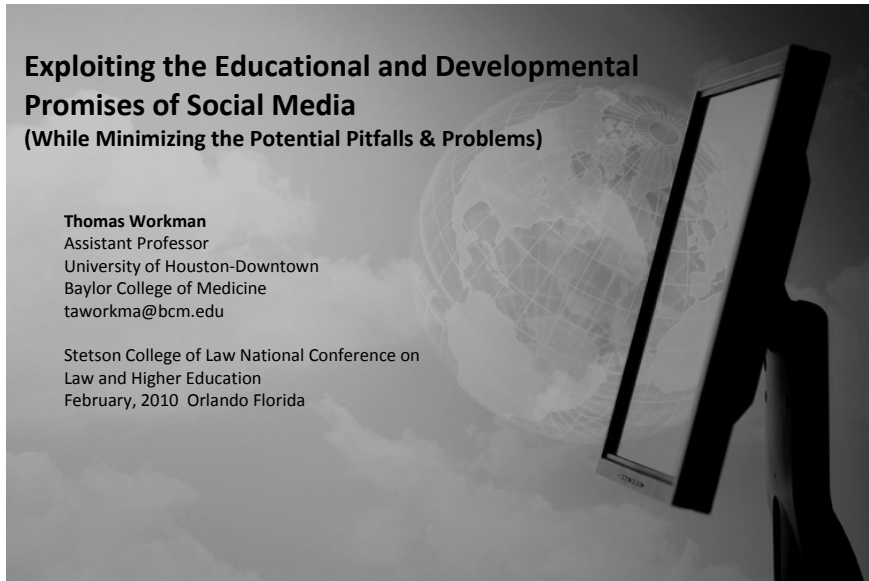


Exploiting the Educational and Developmental Promises of Social Media

(While Minimizing the Potential Pitfalls & Problems)

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Educational Promises of Social Media

- **Using the wiki process to understand knowledge as non-fixed and contested dialogue**
 - Student “editing” of established theory or classic work
 - Student “publishing” of knowledge/thought
 - Immediate feedback and commentary about ideas
- **Social media dialogue about theories and applications presents information in familiar form**
 - Digital natives expect dialogue and interaction
 - Digital natives expect a cacophony of voices/thoughts
- **Exploring people and positions in their settings serves as a perfect place for class discussion**
 - Use of blogs and field-specific communities to enter a larger dialogue with major writers
 - Use of blogs and situation-specific communities to gain perspective

Educational Pitfalls and Problems

- **PITFALL: Social Media quickly distracts academic study**
- **PITFALL: Social Media enables academic dishonesty**
- **PITFALL: Faculty rely on technology to determine infractions**
- **PROBLEM: Most faculty are not digital natives**
 - They are unfamiliar with the culture and technology
 - They do not have the technical know-how to incorporate social media into curriculum
 - They reject the incorporation of social media into the learning process
 - They confuse a misunderstanding of academic sources in the digital age with poor academic quality and/or academic dishonesty.
 - A student uses Wikipedia or web copy as a source on a paper
 - A student copies and pastes information rather than synthesizes and summarizes
 - A student doesn't cite, because citation is non-existent

Addressing Academic Quality & Honesty in the Digital Age

- Does the policy match the technology?
- Does the student know the difference between a credible and non-credible source?
- Have the faculty been trained to correctly identify plagiarisms?
- Have students been trained on plagiarism in the digital age?

Developmental Promises of Social Media

Based on Chickering & Reisser's Seven Vectors of College Student Development (1993)

- **Establishing Identity**
 - Digital worlds enable the exploration of FACETS of identity, often with conflicting facets existing simultaneously
 - Social media creates exposure to a diversity of identities
 - Social media is a laboratory for the exploration of public and private identity
- **Developing Purpose**
 - Exposure to causes, issues, and world events has never been greater
 - Social media has recognized its own narcissism
- **Developing Integrity**
 - Opportunities to develop tolerance, question stereotypes, explore false identities and contradictions

Developmental Pitfalls and Problems

- **PITFALL:** Social media enables incongruity of identity
- **PITFALL:** Dishonesty is a common use of the media
- **PITFALL:** Social media hasn't fully lost its narcissistic ways
- **PITFALL:** Civil discourse is a common victim in social network dialogue
- **PROBLEM:** No theory, few practitioners to help students grow and express through the digital age
- **PROBLEM:** Most Faculty and Administrators mistake uncivil under-developed expression as cyberbullying
- **PROBLEM:** No clear, identified source for digital social rules and education at the institution

Addressing Uncivil Discourse in the Digital Age

- Does the policy clarify free speech limits?
- Does the student know the difference between flaming, ranting, and bullying?
- Have faculty been trained to address uncivil discourse in live and digital settings?
- Have students been trained on expression in the digital age?

On the Digital Horizon (Actually, already here)

- **Laptops in the classroom**
 - Pew Foundation: 80% of Americans 18-29 connect to the internet wirelessly, either through a WiFi or WiMax connection via their laptops or through their handheld device like a smart phone.
 - Students: #1 in sales
 - Uses: Digital note-taking, Slide adaptation, and Salvation from the mindless lecturer
 - Personal property in public space, and accommodated by wireless technology in the classroom
- **Mobile devices everywhere**
 - Pew Foundation:
 - 85% have cell phones or smartphones
 - 53% of Americans 18 – 29 have used a cell phone or Smartphone to access the internet for emailing, instant-messaging, or information-seeking.
 - The rate at which Americans went online with their handheld on the typical day increased by 73% in the sixteen months between the 2007 and 2009 surveys.
 - Uses: Social connection (e-mail, text, call), safety, connection to work/family

Policy Issues that Need Attention NOW

- **Laptops in the classroom**
 - Faculty policies and attitudes are headed for a showdown
 - Disabilities and access only one issue
 - Distinguishing promises from perils should be an institution-wide dialogue
- **Mobile devices everywhere**
 - Most faculty/administrators misunderstand this phenomenon
 - Faculty policies and attitudes are headed for a showdown
 - Developing a firm, modern, but compassionate policy is critical, especially for workers, parents
 - Academic dishonesty issues are most difficult here