

E learning 2.0: Using Blogs as powerful tool to enhance and support
Higher Education applied to Braunschweig University

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This research was supported by Institute of Business and computer science.

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Short biography of the author



The author is Islam Elsayed Hussein Ali, assistant lecturer at Fayoum University, faculty of tourism and hotels, tourism studies department, Egypt and currently at TU Braunschweig, institute of Business and computer science, Germany. He was born on 22.02.1980 in Kalyubia, married, has three children. Additionally, he has obtained Bachelor degree in Tourism studies, Cairo University and master degree in Human Resources Management, Fayoum University, now he is registered to PhD in using information technology in Education (E learning) supervision by Prof. Robra Bissantz, Prof. Mortada Doma and Prof. H. Loteif. Besides, he has gained many experiences as he has worked in Ministry of Tourism and also Egypt Air Company. Moreover he is a member of internal and external associations. He has published many papers in E learning internal and external.

Abstract

The last decades have been marked with the development of widely information and communication technology (ICT) in every field of human life. This phenomenon is the so called (information society), and Higher Education institutions (HEIs) have played, and still do, a very important role in this instance, being a ship for creating and transferring knowledge to society at large. Online supplements to traditional face to face course instruction have become common. One of the most current adaptations of these support technologies and developments that HEIs are starting to implement it is weblogs, so the main objectives of this study was specially designed to look at and describe the blog tool as an innovative tool to enhance education process, determine faculty's current and potential utilization of blogs in their classes, identify faculty perceptions of the benefits of blogs as education resources for in-class and online courses, beside identify the usefulness of using blogs and potential limitations and challenges of those online resources beside to some experiences in using blogs in education worldwide. Data was collected through a questionnaire of 64 staff member (professor, assistant professor and lecturers) at Faculty of Carl-Friedrich- Gauß, Braunschweig University. SPSS version 16.0 program was used to analyses the data and reach to the finding of this study as frequencies, standard deviation, means, t test , also Cronbach alpha was made to ensure the reliability, beside the validity was been achieved. The findings have been indicated very important things and results related to the blogs and staff members have been discussed within the research.

Keywords: *e learning, blog, IT, Quality, web 2.0, Higher education, staff members, e learning 2.0*

Introduction

Web 2.0 or Social web or i web (i interpreted as interactive), is the second generation of the web (<http://clifmims.wetpaint.com/page/modules>). The many projects and services under the web 2.0 umbrella are now a fact of the global information world. It contains a high concentration on the user content, data and content sharing and collaborative efforts, with the use of different kinds of social software or social media (Franklin & Harmelen, 2007) & (O Reilly, 2005). Especially younger people are very familiar with social software so it is obvious that the use of web 2.0 should also be used in education (e learning 2.0). Most institutions especially universities in the developed countries are beginning to embrace social media which consider one of the major component of web 2.0 and realizing the potential power and implications for using it (Reuben, 2009).

Beside, Cavazza, 2008 breaks down the various forms of Social media into ten categories: publication tools, sharing tools, discussion tools, social networks, micro publication tools, social aggregation tools, live cast, virtual worlds, social gaming and massively multiplayer online gaming.

Some of the more popular and pioneers ones are: Weblogs as (Blogger, Word press), Social networking as (Face book, MySpace, Xing), Video sharing as (YouTube, Metacfe), Social bookmarking as (Del-icio-us, Digg, Furl), Micro blog as Twitter, Wikis as Wikipedia, wiki space) and foto sharing as Flickr, beside podcasts (Scott, 2008) & (<http://www.eei.gov.eg/pages/10tools/web2Applications.aspx>). It is very interesting which tool should be applied in teaching. To identify the best ones we will conduct a study, which analyses the advantage of one of the most famous web 2.0 tools (blogs) and identify the challenge and limitations of this tool.

Research Question

Research question focuses on how to benefit from web 2.0 tools as an effective technology in the education sector, and how to activate it for all students and instructors in this field.

Research objectives

- Encourage institutions to work with up to date practices especially in education.

- Determine faculty's current and potential utilization of blogs in their classes.
- Identify faculty perceptions towards using blogs as educational instrument for in-class and online courses.
- Identify the usefulness of using blogs and potential limitations and challenges of those online resources.
- Apply web 2.0 applications to stay on the leading edge of learning/training or really of learning technology (e learning 2.0).
- Indicate the importance of the blogs in Education process.
- Clarify the barriers and obstacles that face these tools application.
- Help the institutions to increase their know how concerning e learning system.
- Presenting findings and recommendations.

Research Hypotheses

- Most of faculty staff members do not use blogs in their teaching at Braunschweig University as a tool to support education.
- Using other tools and lack of institution s encouragement to staff members to use blogs are the main reasons for non Application at TU Braunschweig.
- Blogs are powerful tools to enhance education process.

E learning 2.0

Web 2.0 is the stage of the World Wide Web (WWW) where the internet has become a platform for users to create, upload and share content with others, versus simply downloading content. In the world of e learning, the closest thing to a social network is a community of practice, articulated and promoted by people, which according to Usoro and Abid (2008) one of the most important factors of e learning quality. A community of practice is characterized by a shared domain of interest where members interact and learn together and develop a shared repertoire of resource (Downes, 2005), so e learning 2.0 can be defined as the idea of learning through digital connections and peer collaboration, enhanced by technologies driving web 2.0. Users/Learners are empowered to search, create, and collaborative in order to fulfill intrinsic needs to learn new information (Thalheimer, 2008) & (Ferretti and et.al, 2009) & (Renner, 2006)

Additionally, many studies have proved that from 80% to 90% from person learning is from independent learning which is far from the formal education (Refat, 2009). Noday there is a change in education from formal learning (class, faculty ...) to e-learning to social learning (e-learning 2.0) see table (1). But still you do not find a lot of web 2.0 in education. web 2.0 does the social factor, that the history of social software's popularity proves that people very much want to communicate with other online, reading, writing, listen and comment on the others (Alexander, 2008). As in today's environment, students have all the day access to the library, varied information and social networking tools available via the Internet; it is assumed that they have already experiences in using these tools and therefore a high acceptance.

Table (1) Three Education generation

	Education	Education 1.0	Education 2.0
Meaning is	Dictated	Socially Constructed	Socially constructed and Contextually reinvented
Technology is	Confiscated at the classroom door (digital refugees)	Cautiously adopted(digital immigrants)	Everywhere(ambient digital universe)
Teaching is done	Teacher to student	Teacher to student and student to student (progressivism)	Teacher to student, student to student, student to teacher people-technology-people(Co.constructivism)
Faculties are located	In a building (brick)	In a building or online (brick and click)	Everywhere(thoroughly infused into society, cafes, bowling, bars, workplaces, etc)

Source:<http://www.slideshare.net/frankcalberg/web-20-in-education-1104387,p>

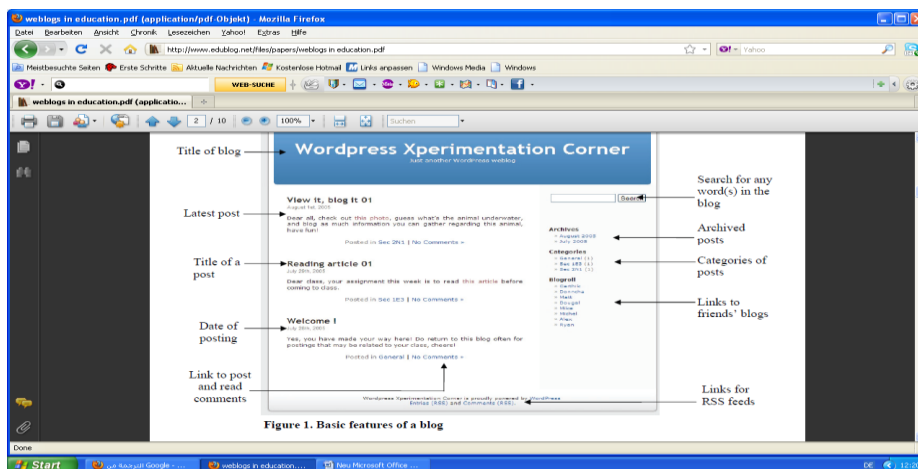
Blogs

Over the past few years, e media has proven that it is more capable to reach audience than the traditional forms of media, and it often meets the needs of them. It has also introduced an innovative channel to interact with all types of audience with all the interactive methods it has provided for direct communication between people such as blogs, Face book, YouTube, etc.

Different interested parties have attempted to define blog, including practitioners, technology companies, academics, and mainstream media. A most simple definition for blog is according to (Downes, 2009) & (Boyd, 2006) (Kienitz, 2007) & (Maramba and et al, 2006), (<http://www.robotwisdom.com/weblogs/>), Wikipedia, and (NCTE, 2008) A blog is abbreviation of weblog or web based log and usually may be called a newspage or online

journal or a filter and it is a personal website which includes no limited covered content; this content is organized as a journal or diary. Each Entry is dated, and the entries are displayed in reverse chronological order or sequence on the weblogs page and contain Commentary and links to other blogs or Web sites and other media related to its topic, images, texts as well as a search facility, beside possibility to attach word processing, spreadsheets and pdf files into a blog furthermore, embedding video, audio or flash movies. The most recent entry is posted at the top, so the reader catches up with blogs by beginning at the top and reading down until they encounter material they are already read. In addition, blogs can be written by single author or sometimes, but less often a group of contributors or authors (Huette, 2006) & Guenther, 2005). From the educational point of view, weblogs are development of traditional learning logs for students and teachers, whether as a complement to traditional lectures or as an e learning tool but the importance of these applications has increased due to the changes in the classroom dynamics. A typical of blogs employed for teaching would include: links to websites as resources, observations on learning content, discussion forums, learning resources and syllabus (Lamshed, 2002

Figure (2) Basic Features of Blog



Source: <http://www.edublog.net/files/papers/weblogs%20in%20education.pdf>

Types of blogs

According to (Mora and Espinosa, 2007) & (Wikipedia) & (Lamshed, 2002) Literature review shows some attempts to classify blogs in terms of different features.

(1) Types based on Style and Content

Firstly, according to Style, there are two types of blogs, one is interactive that weblog author allows comments for others , on the other hand, the other is closed that the weblog author do not allow comments from others. Additionally, another studies indicated that there are another types of blogs according to style, firstly, filter style, that the blog author filters a vast mass of information available online and selects and makes available on his/her site what they consider to be the most useful, interesting or important for their students(providing links to resources). Secondly, journal style, that it is more of free form and open structure containing the authors views, opinions and thoughts (providing a means for personal reflection).Thirdly, notebooks or K (knowledge)-logs for sharing organizational knowledge.

Lastly, regarding to content, there are many sorts of blogs as: personal content, political/social/economic content, information technology content, etc.

(2) Types based on the author of weblog

This is come back to his interest and his work that bloggers focus on a specific topic as professional Marketing person, Business, Tourism etc.

(3) Types based on the role of the writer of weblog in education process

There are two sorts of weblog can be classified according to the role of the writer of weblog in education process as: firstly, instructor weblog: it contains usually course content, course management information, general commentary to all students about their learning progress, etc. it also can be used to share information with students. Secondly, student weblog: it is basically learning weblog as a learning diary and reporting on learning content.

Uses Blog in Higher Education

One of the greatest challenges facing staff members about effective teaching is how to select the most appropriate instructional strategy. A number of variables must be consider as: the intended outcomes of the course, the level of critical reflection required of students, the learning objectives, the density of information to be transferred, the priorities of the institution, the type of students enrolled, and among other, the informal culture of the institution or environment in which classes are being taught (Tileston, 2004).

Ever Since the blog was created, educators have quickly seized this opportunity to enhance both traditional and e learning (Zhuo, 2006). The use of blogs has become popular in educational institutions including public schools and colleges. Unfortunately, there is not much published material on the subject of weblogs in education, however, some studies have identified broadly a lot of blogs uses and benefits in many fields especially higher education for both teacher and student as follow:

Firstly, According to (Farrell, 2003) and (Downes, 2004) Teachers can use the blogs to replace the standard class web page that teacher post class announcement, syllabi, class times and rules, assignment notifications, suggested readings and experiences, etc. beside the teacher can link to internet items that related to their course and short essays directed specifically towards his students. Secondly, Teacher may ask his students to write their own blogs as a part of their course grade that students may be required from them to read for example a part of book and make conclusion of it into two paragraphs with their thoughts and comments and send it to the teacher. Furthermore, students may use the blogs to discover the similarities and difference between them by visiting blogs from other students and reviews their blogs to get to know each other better so blogs may be used to organize in class discussion. Thirdly, some teachers may use group blogs to organize class seminars and providing summaries of readings.

Fourthly, (Downes, 2009)& (Ellison & Wu, 2008)and (Holzberg,2003)added that blogs help students as well as teachers to learn a different skills which it foster the development of writing and research skills, beside, helping and motivation students to do their best work because the feedback they will receive from globally audience after readings their works which offer by blogs which enhance learning and also foster collaboration among learners, furthermore the blogs can contribute to identity formation in students that blogs give the students ownership over their own learning and help them to organize it and permit them to clear their needs and inform their own learning. Fifthly, Blogs may support and enhance the development of digital literacy which according to Huffaker (2005) refers to the ways people become comfortable using technology as they would any other natural language because the students learn to critically assess and evaluate different online resources, moreover students among themselves can conduct into a particular topic and everyone create his or her own interpretation of the material.

Sixthly, Ray (2006) & väljataga (2008) and Achterman, (2006) reported that blogs in Education or Edublogs can be used as a fast, efficient and a supplementary communication tool among learners or among learners and teachers, beside blog can be used as instructional

resources that the teacher can post everything and resources related to the course to the learners and then the learner can review it. Moreover, the blogs can be used as a collaborative tool for learners that person can join a scientific community and collaborate with people and express and develop their ideas and post and receive the feedback to and from other students and teachers. This may enhance the knowledge sharing between learners as well as between learners and teachers. These posts and comments can be updated easily and immediately (Clyde, 2005) & (Huffaker, 2005).

Seventhly, (Richardson 2006 & Ellison & Wu, 2008 and Frankcalberg, 2008) have identified the Educational uses of blogs that weblogs can promote a different sorts of thinking as Creative (think out of the box, seeks changes, renewal), analogical, critical and analytical(gather data, calculate, formulate, evaluate, and seeking efficiency), especially critical thinking skills that critical skills of writing is the central to the act of blogging, also provide a good chance for learners to learn from each other and create a social network (Facilitator) which consider one of the main components of web 2.0.

Eighthly, A research carried out by Lim (2006) about the use of blogs in Education and distance learning, he reached that in most of the education blogs and new articles on the applying blogs in education, many teacher who have been interviewed have observed that blogs have many benefits and uses in education as it help to promote the confidence for learners by allowing, empowering and giving them the method to let their voices be heard and noticed and keep them involved and interested. Beside, helping the learners to be reflected, searchable and sharable, everybody can follow up the learner's progress as parents, peers, teachers, etc. as blogs are more in depth than a classroom discussion.

Ninthly, a research carried out by (Tekinarslan, 2008) at Abnt Izzet Baysal university in turkey about students usage of blogs and the research has indicated that majority of the respondents reflected more than use and advantages of the blogs in educational environment that blogs are more comfortable and cost effective publishing information (free) than traditional methods as using folders and printed copies, beside their features are easy to use (Usability)and at the end of the course the student will be able to create , edit and publish their own blogs pages.(Ebner & Schiefner, 2008)

Tenthly, Mora and Espinosa, 2007) reported that weblogs keeps records for TQM (total quality management) policies in teaching assessment, the information provided by the analysis of the weblog development may be used by the academic institutions to carry out a

SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis of the teaching and learning process and improvement areas can be shown for future deployment.

Lastly, Duffy (2008) concludes the some possible uses of blogs in Education within personal academic, organizational and pedagogical perspectives:

(1) Within a personal academic perspective a blog can support:

Clarify specific technology related advices for other colleagues, reflection on teaching experience, categorized descriptions of resources and methodologies for teaching, rambling regarding professional challenges and teaching tips for other academics.

(2) Within an organizational perspective a blog can support:

Online area for students to post contact details and queries relating to assessment, a common online presence for unit-related information such as calendars, events, assignments and resources.

(3) Within a pedagogical perspective a blog can support:

A collaborative space for students to act as reviewers for course related material, an online gallery space for review of works, writing, etc; in progress, making use especially of the commenting feature, Instructors encouraging reactions, reflections and ideas by commenting on their student s blogs, the development of a student portfolio of work, images and reflections related to industry placement, comments based on content, literature readings and student responses.

Additionally, Most studies about blogs in the literature were conducted in developed countries which have higher internet penetration rate than developing countries, beside their awareness towards new technology and applying it in many areas specially education, beside the students in developing countries have lesser opportunities to access online information sources outside the campus (Mahdey, 2009) & Elshemy, 2008) and Agboola, 2005 was reported that many studies indicated that Information and Communication Technology is significantly under used by students and teachers in developing countries and the problem is a worldwide and regards to the unavailability and/ or inaccessibility of resource in schools and colleges, the scarcity of opportunity to use computers, the lack of experience and training at pre-service level in using ICT, the lack of teachers encouragement to students on using ICT

in schools and college(unwilling) and lastly, the lack of confidence on the part of student and teachers in computing skills.

According to (Lamshed, 2002) & TESOL, 2006) There are some examples of available blogs software as Bloggers: www.blogger.com, Word press: www.wordpress.com, blog lines: www.bloglines.com, blogSource: www.blogsource.com,blogtastic: www.blogtastic.com,blogster: www.blogster.com,Blogstream: www.blogstream.com,Diaryland: www.diaryland.com,Edublogs: www.edublogs.com,LiveJournal: www.livejournal.com,Pitas.com: www.pitas.com,TheBlog: www.theblog.com. Today most bloggers use either Google's popular Blogger service or Word press which enables the learner (user) to create his/ her new blog. Blogs are connected and linked to each other to form the blogosphere; moreover there are some forms of blogs as follow: (Downes, 2009) & Scott, 2008) Micro blog as Twitter, Audio blog as Podcast, Video blog (video sharing) as You Tube, Photo blog (Photo sharing) as Flickr.

Experiences in using Blogs in Higher Education

In today's environment, students have all the day access to the library, varied information and social networking tools available via the Internet; it is assumed that they have already experiences in using these tools and therefore a high acceptance.

The social learning theories of both Albert Bandura and Lev Vygotsky have theorized that learning is a social process. Young people today are proving that they learn and collaborate in a truly social manner when given the opportunity. This mode of learning is often underutilized in many university classrooms (Larry, 2007).

According to (Schrum &Solomon, 2007) & Mustafa, 2008) young people in the developed countries are very aware of web 2.0 tools and many of them spend long time using these tools because these tools and its capabilities engage and motivate students. So it is important for using it in learning process, but all over the world most people use these tools for different purpose (ex., stay in touch with friends, document personal experiences, share knowledge with others, to get information, to be entertained, for self-profiling, etc.)

Many of the world's leading universities are now using blogs at their institutional level as follow:

- (1) University of Warwick (UK)

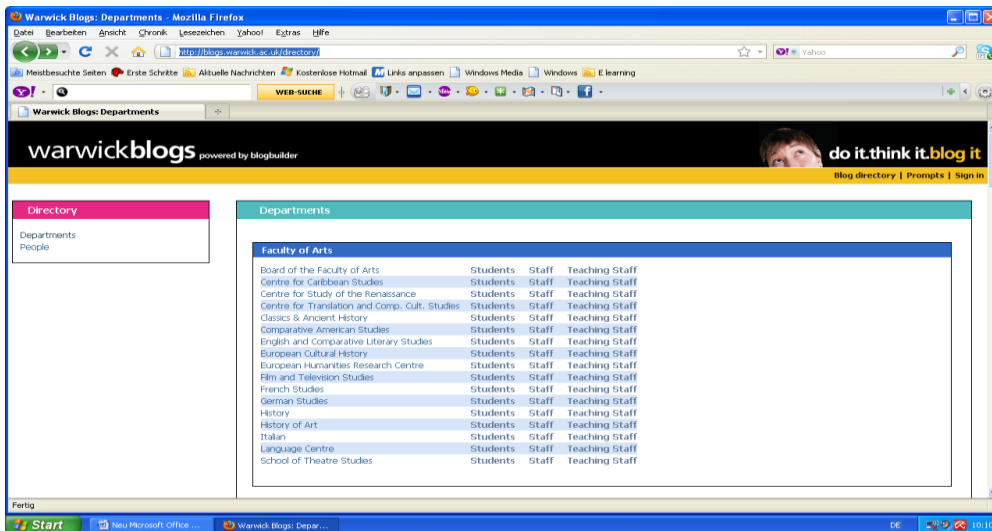
This university consider one of the earliest universities which has offered web 2.0 services at institutional level especially blogs. The blogs are widely used at the University of Warwick since 2004 and each student, staff and staff members has a blog and the following statistics give an indication of the growing for using blogs as in table (2) and figure (3)

Table (2) Statistic of blogs at Warwick university

Blogs	Entries	Tags	Comments	Images
6653	137474	25052	205429	122767

Source: <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/> September 2010

Figure (3) Students, staff and teaching staff blogs at Warwick University



Source: <http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/directory/>

(2) University of Edinburgh (UK)

The only university in the United Kingdom which have a web 2.0 strategy and this strategy indicate how the university can benefit from web 2.0 technologies as using blogs and RSS instead of newsletter and the university should host blogs and wikis services supported by the university’s sign on system, beside making a use of web 2.0 mapping technologies as Google map and using social bookmarking technologies as del. Icio -us to manage course reading, furthermore providing podcasting services (www.ed.ac.uk)

(3) Quinnipiac University (USA)

Carlson (2003)& (Quible,2005) presented an example for using blogs to support education at Quinnipiac University in USA that most professors tried to incorporate blogs into their classes, students were asked to add new entries after an assignment was posted and read their peers' blogs and comment on them, and the advantages of using blogs as the authors summarized , were that students became familiarized with a new web tool with powerful communication capabilities and that students writings and class information were shared electronically and blogs are a perfect fit to help students improve their skills.

Advantages of Blogs

Weblogs have many advantages in education system that can be translated into real benefits for both instructor and student compared to traditional methods, as follow :(Frankcalberg, 2008) & (Boulos and et.al, 2006) & Razavi, 2006) & (Brescia and Miller, 2007) & (Jones, 2003) & (Brescia, Miller, 2007) & (Paquet, 2003) & (Garton, 2008)

- Using a blog makes learning independent of time and place that learning has changed from teaching at a certain time in a certain place to teaching and learning anytime and anywhere and accessing to information posted in the blog and the ability to link to other documents 24/7.
- Usability of the blog and also easy to setup, maintain, administrate and update from anywhere without having worry about FTP connections, web authoring software and etc because they use RSS which known as Really Simple Syndication within it readers of a blog can subscribe to the feeds to keep track of new posts in the blog. Also one can obtain updates in multiple blogs without actually visiting the blogs through a web browser.
- Interactivity that students or instructor can comment and ask questions. Also external people from university or other universities or industry or interests can also share. The ability to comment on these ideas enables individuals to participate in social construction of knowledge and meaning making(Ferdig, 2004)
- Using a blog encourage learners to be active and continuously try things out or task to provide content throughout the course period and also invite them to be collaborative whether among themselves or among them and instructors that using blogs make education demand participant, centered and oriented this means changing from one way teaching and supply orientation to participation by everyone.

- Blogs allow all types of resources to be published to the web as text, images, video, etc. and it can be used as a knowledge log and personal content management system.
- Instructors do not need to periodically request the learning logs to the students.
- Using blogs help learners to overcome the fear of expressing themselves outside of the safe environment of the classroom.
- Blogs have the ability to reach large learners without losing information quality and allowing for different levels of details.
- Using blogs help learners to improve their writing competencies and make education more informal and captures changes in thinking and ideas.
- Others technologies can be applied jointly as wikis, Face book, YouTube, etc.
- Using blogs can reduce the costs in education process, as costs of the exam (Rooms, papers, pens, control, and transportation) because their availability of many open source/free or low cost software and hosting options to run them.
- Blogs provide opportunities to take what is learned in the classroom and express it to those in the public eye- just as they will have to do in the real world beside, learning technical skills for the workplace.
- Blogs have reasonable potential to support extracurricular composition, beside students free writing allows a clearing the mind to do more formal writing.
- No knowledge of HTML (or of Web authoring in general) is needed for blogging. Typically a student creating a Web site using a tool such as Blogger registers as a user, and sets up a page using one of templates.
- The use of blogs helps students become subject-matter expert.
- Increase student interest and ownership in learning.
- Provides opportunities for diverse perspectives both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Dickey (2004) pointed out a surprising advantage of using this new media tool blog to alleviate learner feelings of isolation, alienation, and frustration. The author found weblogs or blogs may provide a wider range of tools for bridging learners feelings of isolation.
- Blogs are social media technology (Fisher&Baird, 2005) and have a role in education by encouraging personal reflection

Limitation and Challenges in Using Blogs in Education

Although of the most advantages and benefits of using blogs in education, there are some low limitation and challenges that face whether instructor or student as follow: (Huann and et.al, 2006) & (Hollyhead & Cox, 2006)

- Inadequate infrastructure as lack of computers, difficult to access the internet and high quality connections as happens in some developing countries where the internet connection is inexpensive but slow compared to developed countries.
- Unawareness of new technologies and computer illiterate users may be a great limitation and challenges for users in developing countries compared to great developed countries which produce always the new technologies and export it to the world.
- Most of weblogs are hosted in public, Free ASPs, learning blogs should be hosted in private servers, so they do not show neither advertisements nor banners which are the most common method of ASPs financing.
- Instructors may have some difficulties in assessing student participation in the blog. There are many indicators should take into account as group grading, individual posting, quality of posts, etc.
- Legal liabilities – copyright, defamation, racism that one of most concerns is the infringement of copyrights so whether instructor or student must respect others' intellectual properties by seeking permission from the copyright owners before they post any such materials in the blogs because anyone who violates the copyright acts or is found guilty of defamation or racism is liable to have legal actions taken against them.
- Faculty staff members' time to read and respond to blogs may be short and should be underestimated, beside students need to be encouraged to write the blogs.

Benefits of the blogs

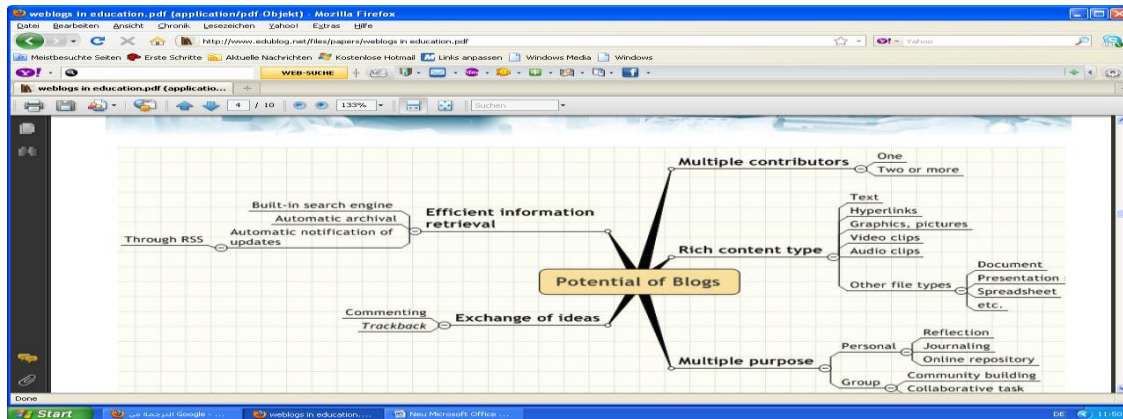
The literature suggests that blogging can be used positively to enhance the teaching and learning. Blogs in education process offer both the teacher and student a list of benefits in their activities. According to (TESOL, 2006) & (Pinkman, 2005) & (Wikipedia, 2010) & (Huette, 2006) & Lee & Allen, 2006) the main benefits of the blogs in education system as follow:

- Blogs allow that Encouraging students to go beyond the classroom, and communicate with new people, may have been a better way to encourage learner independence.

- One major benefit of the blog is their use as e learning tools that teaching and learning process can continue outside the classroom, beside it has the potential for public audience a global audience.
- Using blog allow both instructor and learner to edit, read, write and send his/her feedback which may be useful in enhancing the content.
- Enduring of the blog is also an important benefit that the users can gain.
- Teachers are using blogs as a way to post important information such as homework, important dates, missed lessons, projects, discussion boards, and other useful classroom information that is accessible by all. Students can access this information from anyplace and also anytime.
- The blog often acts as a support system for teachers where they can access ideas, tools, and gain support and recognition from other professionals in their field from communication among them.
- It is easy to introduce the use of blogs in the classroom and allows both the teacher and student the ability to edit and add content.
- Blogs can Promote Critical and analytical thinking that instructor can post a text related to the course and Students can respond in the beginning to the text with their thoughts, feelings, connections, questions etc. Other students would have the opportunity to respond and react to these responses; this may generate conversation amongst the students and develop their critical and analytical thinking skills.
- The use of blogs in education gives students a global perspective. Instructors from different faculties, universities internal and external, countries, and continents are able to share and collaborate on different projects and learning together. A classroom in Egypt can collaborate with classrooms in Germany, England, USA, etc. with just a few clicks of a button.
- Blogs are a Combination of solitary and social interaction.
- Blogs can Promote Analogical , Creative, Intuitive and Associational thinking
- The simply features of the blogs make it easy to use without requiring more technical skills.
- Using weblogs (new technologies) prepare students better for the current labor market.
- Blogs enable the instructors to review how students have participated and developed over the course.
- Weblogs improve coordination and allow interaction to a far greater extent especially in courses which have many joint instructors and many students.

The following figure summarize the potentials of Blogs in Education

Figure (5) Potentials of blogs for teaching and learning



Source: Huann, and et.al, (2006)

Alternative to Blog (Edublog)

There are a number of online tools that teachers can use to establish an online blog. Three of the most commonly used tools are Blogger, WordPress and eduBlogs. Edublogs is the World's largest education blogging platform, focused on teachers and students with educational support and features and free, also, weblog-hosting service for educators and students that uses Word Press software. (<http://www.larkin.net.au/>) There are three types of edublogs, they are: Edublog for student, Edublog for teacher and Edublog for institutions (<http://edublogs.org/campus/>), and finally it is up to an individual academic to decide whether to use free blog software like Blogger.com or purchase a more sophisticated software.

Methodology

This part of the research is based on a Descriptive exploratory approach with quantitative and qualitative methods through questionnaire to 64 staff members at Braunschweig University, Carl-Friedrich Gauß Faculty ,male and female in different disciplines in 24 institutes at TU Braunschweig in Germany who were working in the period of the research and it investigated their perceptions and their awareness of e learning 2.0 tools especially blogs and its utilization in teaching and learning process according to the quality of e learning in higher education. There are a number of indicators that clearly demonstrate where staffs are relation to e learning 2.0 systems.

Data Collection

The research used two sources to collect data; they are divided into two sources, first, primary data which collected via qualitative and quantitative methods. A questionnaire was considered to the most appropriate to reach the required population (64 questionnaires). This questionnaire was pilot tested with a random sample of 10 faculty staff at different institutes only to assess the importance, clarity, and wording of questions and items. Second, secondary data which gathered from journals, conferences, publication books, internet websites, periodicals...others. This secondary data identified the knowledge already known which called literature review.

The Sample

The research sample consists of 64 staff members at 24 institutes at Braunschweig University, Faculty of Carl-Friedrich- Gauß. They have been chosen with complete Census.

Return Rate

64 questionnaires were sent, (34) of them were valid 27 male (79.4%) and 7 female (20.6%). The return rate is 53 %. This was because a lot of staffs have no time and have a lot of things to do.

Complete Census

Usually called also Census and defined as a technique used in selecting a sample and requires whole of the population (Mike, P., 2007). Richard & Elwood, 2006 added that a census is a sample of 100% of the population and it is enticing to believe that high quality findings are obtained from a complete enumeration of a population than from a sample.

Data analyses and Findings

SPSS program version 16.0 has been used to analysis the data in addition to researchers comments that have resulted from analysis of the questionnaires answers. The level of staff member towards their using blogs in teaching was analyzed using two types of questions, open end questions and open questions. Beside, T test, correlation, standard deviation (Std), means, mean differences and frequencies. Beside ANOVA test and scheffe tests

The Findings from the research have provided interesting results regarding the current status of e learning 2.0 at institutes of TU Braunschweig, from the university staff members point view.

Validity and Reliability

Table (4) Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,949	,973	15

From table (4) to ensure validity, items which concluded from literature review in e learning 2.0 and blogs have been listed in a questionnaire which was piloted on 10 staff member from different institutes before sending it to staff members of TU Braunschweig institutes. And to ensure Reliability a Cronbach alpha test was made according to Frank (2007) and Peter (2008) it is found it's loading 0.949 in total for all questions and range from 0.940 to 0.951 as in table (5) which mean that results are reliable. Additionally there is very high correlation between questions range from 0.688 to 0.972 which means that the questions cover and represent the topic of using blogs in teaching , std Deviation in average is 0.822, and lastly T test has been done to expertise the significance and it has shown that P less that .05 as in Table (6) this means that the results are significance and t value in total is 14.97.

Table (5) Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Std(Deviation)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gender	26,50	,781	0.410	,948
Position	24,97	,853	1.310	,943
Age	25,56	,947	1.184	,940
Years of experiences	25,76	,946	1.179	,940
Instructional setting	25,53	,808	0.968	,944
Do you heard about the term e learning 2.0?	26,56	,688	0.359	,950
Do you heard about the term social software?	26,62	,542	0.288	,951
Do you know blog 2.0?	26,44	,824	0.448	,947

Do you use blogs and created your own blog and made it available on the internet and contributed to it?	26,24	,858	0.507	,946
If Yes, What of the following purpose do you use it?	26,12	,801	0.500	,947
If you use it as instructional tool, you are using it:	25,53	,917	0.936	,942
How often do you contribute to blogs during work time?	24,00	,972	2.125	,951
Do you think that blogs is an innovative teaching resource to supplement course content?	26,47	,804	0.431	,948
If you do not use blog, which of the following factors limiting the use of blogs at your institute?	25,09	,947	1.280	,940
Do you have interest to use it in teaching and learning?	26,50	,781	0.410	,948

Table (6) T test statistics

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	17,132	33	,000	1,206	1,06	1,35
Position	12,177	33	,000	2,735	2,28	3,19
Age	10,573	33	,000	2,147	1,73	2,56
Years of experiences	9,599	33	,000	1,941	1,53	2,35
Instructional setting	13,106	33	,000	2,176	1,84	2,51

Do you heard about the term e learning 2.0?	18,605	33	,000	1,147	1,02	1,27
Do you heard about the term social software?	22,040	33	,000	1,088	,99	1,19
Do you know blog 2.0?	16,468	33	,000	1,265	1,11	1,42
Do you use blogs and created your own blog and made it available on the internet and contributed to it?	16,925	33	,000	1,471	1,29	1,65
If Yes, What of the following purpose do you use it?	18,538	33	,000	1,588	1,41	1,76
If you use it as instructional tool, you are using it:	13,552	33	,000	2,176	1,85	2,50
How often do you contribute to blogs during work time?	10,167	33	,000	3,706	2,96	4,45
Do you think that blogs is an innovative teaching resource to supplement course content?	16,729	33	,000	1,235	1,09	1,39
If you do not use blog, which of the following factors limiting the use of blogs at your institute?	11,929	33	,000	2,618	2,17	3,06
Do you have interest to use it in teaching and learning?	17,132	33	,000	1,206	1,06	1,35

Frequencies analysis for each question

(1) Instructional setting

Most of staff members 19 (55.9%) use the hybrid mode of teaching which mean in class and online but about 13 (38.2%) use class only and 2 (5.9%) use online only.

(2) Hearing about the terms e learning 2.0, social software and blog2.0 at questions 6,7,8 measuring the awareness of these terms and most of staff members know it that 29

respondent (85.3%) heard about the term e learning 2.0 and 31 respondent (91.2%) heard about social media while 25 of them (73.5%) are knowing blogs 2.0.

- (3) Using and creating own blog and made it available on the internet and contribute to it. The analysis has indicated that 18 respondent (52.9%) have created blogs and contribute to it. And 14 of them (41.2%) use it as professional tool while the other use it as private tool 20 (58.8%).the respondents using the blogs as professional tool for many purposes as: 29.4% to provide and store information material related to the course for the students, the same percentage use it to help and motivate students to do their best works, 35.3% to communicate and share knowledge between students or other people, while percentage (45.9%) use it to promote the difference sorts of thinking , 31.2% to explore important teaching and learning issues, 44% o reflect on their teaching and training experiences and 38.4% of them use blogs for other purposes as to publish important dates and events and to increase image and to answer the questions related to course and exams.
- (4) Contributing to the blog during the work time. 12.5% of the staff read and contribute to the blog several times a day while 31.3% daily, 9.4% several times a week, 9.4% weekly, 3.1% monthly and 12.5% only when pointing to specific website (e.g. by link) and 21.9% do not contribute to blogs never.
- (5) Blogs as innovative teaching resource to supplement course content, 78.6% of them agree and consider blog as a powerful to enhance teaching process.
- (6) Positive perception towards using blogs in the class, the sample were asked open question to indicate their positive perception towards using blogs in their classes, the answer was various from ease to share knowledge, comfortable way to distribute information, allow discussion and feedback , blogs allow all types of resources to be published to the web in different format as text ,Images, video, links etc and it can be used as a knowledge log and personal content management system, motivational tool for students that they can present their achievements easily to the public, better communications, quick response, faster and detailed communication outside of lecture time, good in capturing students opinions and as a tool to summarize findings, additionally good for image reasons, online area for students to post contact details and reflect on teaching experience, seems to be useful for large classes and discussions in a broader forum, usage does not depending on time and place of both student and lecturer, everyone can participate.

- (7) Negative perception towards using blogs in the class, from staff members point of view, they have listed some negative aspects of using blogs in the class as blogs legal liabilities, copyright, defamation, mostly bloated, instructors may have some difficulties in assessing students participation in the blog that there are many indicators should take into account as group grading, individual posting, quality of posts, etc. beside difficult to update , if you are giving almost the same content in a basic lecture year after year, many students will only read what they must, more workload, faculty staff members time to read and respond to blogs may short and should be underestimated, a lot of students are a little bit restrained in using blogs, but it depends on the field of study
- (8) Factors limiting the use of blogs in the institutes at TU Braunschweig, low percentage of the respondents who are not using blogs in their classes have indicated some reasons for not using as Lack of awareness with web 2.0 in general and blogs in particular (9.2%), Using other tools instead of blogs (20%), lack of familiarity with blogs and unwilling to use it(12.3%), unavailability and inaccessibility of resource for students and faculty within or out of campus (3.1%), Lack of experience at the pre-service level in using ICT(7.7%), Lack of teachers encouragement to students on using ICT(6.2%), lack of students and teachers confidence in computing skills (3.1%), the scarcity of opportunity to use computers(3.1%), concern by security issues(Hacking,etc.) about (1.5%), concern by legal issues(Liabilities) (4.6%), technology is too difficult to implement(1.5%) and 6.2% showed another reasons as blog format does not suit repeating lectures, missing capacity and lack didactic of models which would implement the usage of blogs.
- (9) Interesting in using blogs in teaching and learning, the majority of respondents have high interesting in using blogs in their classes (79.4%).

We can conclude that blogs provide both teacher and student with more advantages and benefits, and faculty staff members at TU Braunschweig have positive perceptions towards using blogs and consider blogs as an innovative tools (78.6%) and however, low percentage of them are using blogs(creators) in teaching to support learning and teaching process (39.9%) and about (22.2%) using private blogs and 37.9% do not use blogs (inactive according to Social techno graphics ladder), But high percentage need and have the desire to use it in teaching process (79.4%).

One way ANOVA test and scheffe tests (at level 0.05) were used to identify whether there were significant differences in usage of blogs between academics from different departments and with varied teaching experiences and academic rank. The results showed significant differences between using blogs and awareness of blogs between staff members from different departments.

ANOVA tests were used to analyse the correlations between length of teaching experiences and using of blogs. There was a significant correlation between the length of teaching experiences and using of blogs and awareness of them. According to academic rank, lecturer claimed the highest percentage , followed by professor and assistant professors.

Limits and Future Research

There are three types of limitation, firstly, Place Limit at Braunschweig University, institutes of Faculty of Carl-Friedrich- Gauß (Germany).secondly, Scientific Limit as Higher education and Blogs from several Web 2.0 tools and lastly, Time limit from (May) till (September).

Conclusion

The latest generation of collaborative Web-based tools, namely blogs offer many unique and powerful information sharing and collaboration features. In this paper we have explored how these Web 2.0 applications (blogs) would prove useful on the long and can support learning process whether for teacher or students and although of many universities all over the world uses it in teaching but TU Braunschweig still in the infant stage in using blogs to support learning although they have awareness of these new technologies, It is interesting that this set of findings is clearly consistent with the hypothesis that most of faculty staff members at TU braunschweig do not use blogs in their teaching process and blogs are powerful tool to enhance education process the and the paper recommend all institutions to apply blogs in their teaching to meet market needs and benefit from these good tools .

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