

Abstract Breaking down institutional walls with ICTs

Craig, Barbara
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

The paper develops a set of concepts in terms of linking educational institutions virtually, so that students can work between schools and learning levels with the aim of a seamless learning community. Ideally, the goal is for personalized learning. However, the concept of collaboration via Web 2.0 tools for educational inclusion via technology has not been closely examined.

The many potential challenges to such a networking project for the community is not unfamiliar to community informatics. In this case, the relationship between key individuals working from different professional perspectives (Information Systems, Education) is help the drive the project.

The project in New Zealand aims to foster school community 'loops' . The 'loops' have arisen out of grass-roots action around resource sharing in country which is constantly challenged by its geographic isolation and fragile economy.

Government is now thinking about creating a 'super loop' to link all local loops into a high speed educational network which then links out into the world. Ideally, no matter where a child, teacher or parent sits, there is the opportunity to link into the world.

In this paper, one case study of an inner-city initiative in its first months of operation is examined. Technical and social challenges are examined. Institutional barriers and competitiveness are examined as real dimension that affect networking. All schools will be required to move to Moodle but many have other preferred content management systems.

How are staff to be brought through a culture and learning change, legal issues, and other challenges to skills and information sharing? How are technical specialists to become sensitised to the particular social and educational philosophies and viewpoints that characterise school culture? . Furthermore, schools are not alike: for example one school dealing with young truants will be put back into contact with schools where students were previously students. Additionally, parents will be able to see student records, but here are major privacy implications.