

Title of Session: WebQuests and Blogs

Moderator: Bernie Dodge

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BJ: while we're waiting for Bernie to log in, please read the information on the HELPFUL HINTS note on the top part of your screen

BJ: Hi, Bernie. We can wait a couple minutes to officially start, but how about if we do introductions?

workshop at the NCCE Conference next week.

BernieD: Sounds good to me, BJ

BJ: I'm a teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for TAPPED IN

BernieD: I'm a professor of ed tech at San Diego State U

JanP: I'm a French teacher at a middle school in Illinois.

SteveW: Science teacher at NVHS in Illinois, Jan is my friend!

KatieC: I work for a program called "Technology in Motion" with the Alabama State Department of Education and a Ph.D. student at The U of Alabama.

CraigD: I am a technology teacher at a First Nation school in New Brunswick, Canada.

JeffC: Ed Tech Specialist at the College of Education Pacific University (Forest Grove, Oregon).

NancyES joined the room.

JasenL: Computer Tech at Downers Grove North High School... Steve is my friend

BernieD: Is that everyone?

JeffC: Lots of people from Illinois... perhaps we need a Fermilab Webquest/Blog.

NancyES: I am also in the NLU class. I'm a Tech Specialist in an elementary district.

SteveW: We're all in the same tech program at NLU.

BernieD: Ah, great.

NancyES: Hi Jasen

BernieD clears throat. Shall we formally begin?

SteveW: yes

BernieD: OK... tonight's topic is blogging and WebQuests. I guess the first thing to cover is blogging, all by itself. Who'd like to define blogging for us?

NancyES: Ok. I'm anxious to find out what a Blog is. I think I am becoming one.

BernieD: Anyone?

KatieC: From what I've read, there's lots of controversy over an actual definition

NancyES: I have no clue what a blog is.

SteveW: it's like ferris bueller in here? is it some kind of online journal?

BernieD: Yes, and more.

KatieC: As with any evolving technology, always changing, tough to define.

BernieD: A blog is short for Web Log.

BJ . o O (a reminder to click on the ACTIONS drop down menu and scroll down to DETACH to make your chat window larger and easier to read)

BernieD: It's like a public diary with some additional conventions.

NancyES: Thank you BJ

MarionGuest2: True...definitions keep evolving, but I think most blogs have dated entries and allow for comments from readers.

LaurieGuest3 joined the room.

BernieD: One tradition is that each posting is rather short and often contains a link to some other site.

NancyES: So, are we blogging now? or chatting?

BernieD: This is not a blog. It's not done in realtime.

LaurieGuest3: Hi KatieC!

BernieD: Another convention is that postings are arranged in reverse chronological order. The top of the page is the most recent.

SteveW: Like a discussion board?

KatieC waves at Laurie

BernieD: There are variations, of course. The norm is that there is only one author for a blog. But one can have group blogs.

NancyES: Or the whiteboard?

BernieD: Best thing to do is to illustrate with an example.

JanP: Good!

BernieD: Let's go visit my blog.

CraigD: Sounds good

JasenL: that should help!

BernieD: The link is <http://home.earthlink.net/%7Ebdodge/blog/>

BJ . o O (the url is hyperlinked...click on it to open a new window)

BernieD: Go take a look and we'll talk about it in a minute.

NancyES: We won't lose this chat if we go to the link?

BernieD: No.

JasenL: This is kind of like an annotated bibliography? right?

SteveW: What is powered by blogger? software or online site?

BernieD: Hmm... in a way. But one difference is timeliness. It's rooted in each days events.

NancyES: I don't see the difference yet between this and a web page with links.

JasenL: interesting...

BernieD: Bibiliographies, on the other hand, are more static.

SteveW: what happens to the comments?

LaurieGuest3: This is very much like an online diary of sorts, right?

JasenL: I guess I kind of meant just review sites rather than just copying sources

BernieD: Well, it IS a web page with links. The difference is in the culture around it and in the ease of updating it. To add to your blog, you don't need a web editor. You go to a link and a window pops up that you type text into. When you click OK, your words are uploaded automatically.

BernieD: Note the list of links in the left hand margin. Those are other blogs. Another aspect of the genre is that people read each others' blogs and comment on them.

JasenL: so like a wizard interface pops up and you just type in it with html skills....?

JasenL: with no html skills needed

BernieD: You'll notice that there's a comment link after each of my blog entries. People can add to what I've said. IT makes the dialog a little more 2-way.

BernieD agrees with Jasen.

CraigD: How do you go about setting up your own blog?

JeffC: There are a lot of free blogger sites.

NancyES: Each blog link from your page seems to pop up its own window leaving yours intact.

JasenL: so it can also act like a message board?

BernieD: You get yourself a free account on Blogger. <http://www.blogger.com>

JeffC: I personally use "ujournal" ... but blogger.com and others are all out there.

BernieD: Go take a look at that.

NancyES: OK

LaurieGuest3: How did you design the blog yourself? I have a blogger account and just picked on of their templates.

JasenL: How is this being used in a classroom situation?

BernieD: One indication that blogging is taking off is that Google just purchased Blogger.

BernieD: We'll get to that, Jasen.

NancyES: It's sort of like internet graffiti.

BernieD: Laurie, I just took one of the templates myself and gradually modified it.

JasenL: sorry just thinking to fast!!!

LaurieGuest3: Okay, thanks.

LaurieGuest3: Can you password protect blogs on blogger?

BernieD: Make them private? Sure. It requires some PHP or Javascript, just as for any other web page.

LaurieGuest3: thanks.

BernieD: But most people have a blog so that they can be read.

BernieD: Here's another blog to look at. This one is by a 15 year old.

BernieD: <http://alexdodge.net/>

LaurieGuest3: The privacy issue is important if you have students writing to it. At least down here in the South.

NancyES: any relation?

JanP joined the room.

BernieD: Just a coincidence.

JasenL: I think I would have the same concerns Laurie

KatieC: you can always use fake screen names...not their real names

KatieC: wouldn't that take care of the privacy issue?

LaurieGuest3: Yes

BernieD: Many blogs are written with nom de plumes. No direct link to real names or addresses.

BernieD: OK... everyone clear on the concept of a blog?

CraigD: Got it.

LaurieGuest3: yes

SteveW: yup

KatieC: yep

BernieD: Let's zoom out and look at the bigger picture, then.

NancyES: I think so

BernieD: Here's a page I put up for one of my courses.

JasenL: got it

BernieD: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec570/cooltools/blogging.html>

BernieD: Click on the diagram to get to a whole load of links.

JeffC: No fair... Bernie is using Inspiration in his blogs!

BernieD: All's fair in love and education.

LaurieGuest3: Bernie, I love the Inspiration diagrams. You one on wq taskonomy is one of my favorites!

BernieD: It's great software.

JeffC left the room (signed off).

BernieD: You'll see that there are several links on the lower right about edubloggers. It's still a new phenomenon, so any of you who want to try this will still be on the ground floor.

LaurieGuest3: Does anyone know if blogs are blocked by BESS filtering software?

JeffC joined the room.

SteveW: i would think it would depend on the site content?

BernieD: I think it would depend on the words used.

SteveW: and the school policy

LaurieGuest3: at one school system in my area, no free websites are allowed--no hotmail, no yahoo, no nothing!

BernieD: Min Jun Kim's blog at the top of this page, for example, uses young adult vocabulary.

KatieC: If some of you folks remember Adam Curry from MTV, he's a big founder of schoolblogs.com...

KatieC: I like what he says about blogs:

BernieD: Yup, just checked, she's like a sailor.

CraigD: Is that Wil Wheaton from Stand By Me?

BernieD: And Star Trek.

CraigD: Cool!

BernieD: Dave Barry also has a blog.

NancyES: Who are some of the providers of blog sites?

BernieD: So does Moby, Gary Hart, and our next president, Howard Dean.

KatieC: ...blogs can give children their own soapbox, their own voice, they become habitual writers, they have their own voice"

NancyES: Are they all free?

JasenL: I'm little confused.... How is a Blog really different from a messageboard?

SteveW: good question

LaurieGuest3: I think the constant writing opportunity is a great way to get kids into the habit of daily writing.

MarionGuest2: I'm checking out the Howard Dean blog!

BernieD: Jasen: 1. It's usually written by one person. 2. It's not just random messaging. It has a voice. It's a narrative.

JasenL: I think most message boards are structured around a topic and give writers a chance to respond to other opinions.

JeffC: Well... there are certainly Blogs that can act as message boards, although Bernie is right insofar as most are single person narratives. Many blogs have "client" tools that allow you to compose offline, and upload later (ujournal has clients like this).

BernieD: Thank you, Jeff. Do you have a favorite blog to illustrate the concept?

JasenL: that makes sense Jeff - I can see the difference there.

LaurieGuest3: Blogs seem to be a way for kids to publish their writing for lots of people to see and respond to it, I would think.

JasenL: I think school administrators will view this [as] a message board - and message boards at least in my school have been a big no no for students to use

LaurieGuest3: The Where is Raed? blog is very interesting. And Jasen, ditto on the message board no no.

JasenL: Administrators have taken strides to protect students work from the outside world

LaurieGuest3: that's why I had asked about password protecting them

BernieD: I think administrators need to be educated by seeing some examples. Look at <http://www.brooklyninternational.org/weblogs/classh/>

CraigD: Isn't it strange. We are instructed to create real-world experiences in our classrooms and then administration shelters the students from it.

JasenL: Being the schools web master I know the school will not allow any forum to be set up that allows for others outside the school to comment on students work.

JeffC: I don't use blogs much... I started one to record my work history... but for the most part, I am a message board kinda guy.

BernieD: I'm finding blogs becoming more and more central to what I do. I read a dozen other blogs a day, I enjoy contributing to my own and my department's blog, and I've built several of my graduate courses around blogs.

LaurieGuest3: The last example is how I envisioned be able to use it for class.

BernieD: It's a 2-way web. Just reading web pages without responding or creating isn't that much different than watching TV.

JasenL: yes but we don't just watch tv in school.

SteveW: The brooklyninternational is a great example how this could be used for english and history. i could even set it up for some type of science reading

BernieD: There's nothing inherently dangerous about blogs for kids. You can allow commenting or not. You can make it accessible outside of the school or not.

JasenL: I agree this does have some great applications I just see problems with it be[ing] public to the web

SteveW: how much time would be involved in setting up and maintaining an education blog ?

NancyES: It looks like they are most effective if they are monitored daily.

BernieD: You can set one up in half an hour once you're familiar with Blogger. Maybe less.

JasenL: you last point clears it up - This does have good classroom applications where everyone is responsible for the words they use

BernieD: Let's move on to the core of tonight's topic: blogging and WebQuests.

BernieD: Anyone have any ideas on how to combine the two?

KatieC: one more thing, bernie

KatieC: before we move on...

BernieD perks up his ears

KatieC: just wanted to let everyone know that i set up a group today on blogs so we can continue this discussion forever if we wish! :)

KatieC: a tapped in group, that is

KatieC: so please join!

KatieC: and let's continue our discussion and sharing of resources

KatieC: ok, i'm finished. :)

BernieD: Cool, Katie. Let me show you one of my own class blogs:

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec670/>

BernieD: The only poster there now is me, since the course is only offered in the Fall. But if you go back in the archive, you'll see a lot of discussion going on. It adds a lot to the course and allows what one semester's group learned to be passed on to the next generation.

KatieC: fabulous idea

KatieC: love the passing of stuff to the next classes

BernieD: Back to blogging and WebQuests. What's the potential connection?

KatieC scratches head

LaurieGuest3: you can set up blogs to continue the subject discussion that the webquest research started.

BernieD nods

KatieC: oooo!!! there's a thought!

CraigD: It seems that a lot of the Web Quests that I have had experience with don't provide for collaboration with other students or classes completing the Quest. If it was linked to a Web Log you could interact with other classed that are doing the Web Quest.

LaurieGuest3: The second graders that I did my Dinoshow web quest with would love to blog all day about the cool stuff they learned but didn't get to share during the presentations.

BernieD: Great idea!

SteveW good thought

MarionGuest2: And you can invite authors/experts to add comments...

BernieD nods

JasenL: this would be a great way for students to provide feedback to other students

KatieC: great idea!

BernieD: Here are a few other thoughts that came to me.

BernieD: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec570/cooltools/wqandblogging.htm>

LaurieGuest3: My Dino Show web quest can be found at

<http://www.lauriefowler.com/dinoshow.html>

BernieD: There are three design patterns that lend themselves to group blogging.

BernieD: Meeting of Minds is one in which kids learn enough about someone else that they can spontaneously speak/write as them.

LaurieGuest3: Cool. These topics really do seem made for blogs.

PamB joined the room.

BernieD: In a Simulated Diary WebQuest, you keep a journal (with some scaffolding) as if you were in a particular time and place.

LaurieGuest3: We did the meeting of the minds thing in my grad class last fall. I had to be Albert Bandura and be interviewed by someone. It was cool. I wish I had thought about using a blog to do it.

BernieD: And Analyzing for Bias requires you to look at some form of communication and identify the hidden agenda. There are many blogs, including my own, that have a particular political point of view. What better way to get kids to discern that than by giving them real, current blogs to analyze?

LaurieGuest3: The bias idea is great.

CraigD: I recently reviewed a web based project called 20th Century Heros and Villians. <http://learningcurve.pro.gov.uk/heroesvillains/> Imaging if it was paralleled with a Web Log that allowed Japanese and American students to discuss whether or not Harry Truman was a hero or a villain.

LaurieGuest3: great idea. would be interesting to set that up.

BernieD: Wow! That's a great example, Craig!

BernieD: And the correct answer, given that he was a Democrat, is HERO!

BernieD: (joking)

LaurieGuest3: GO BERNIE!!!!

KatieC: LOL

BernieD: Welll... we're almost out of time here.

BernieD: Any general questions for the good of the order?

LaurieGuest3: Bernie, do you have any upcoming discussions on webquests?

BernieD: Next month, no topic chosen yet. Watch the TI calendar for a date.

LaurieGuest3: Thanks!

MarionGuest2: What tool do you see as most useful to be developed for blogging educators/students?

BernieD: Blogger is pretty easy. Movable Type is harder to set up but more powerful. I use blogger for all 4 of mine.

BernieD: (Was that your question?)

MarionGuest2: Yes--but I'm also curious about your "wish list"....

BernieD: Ah. I've added things to my blogs that took extra steps. They should be built in from the start: comments, blogroll management... that's two.

BernieD: A counter. A "where are my hits coming from".... I've got all those but had to add them myself.

MarionGuest2: Thanks. I'm looking forward to exploring all your blogs.

KatieC: how'd you do those things?

BernieD: I suppose for a school blog as a teacher I'd want a way to monitor all kids blogs from one spot.

SteveW: Thanks for the information Bernie, another tool for my bag of tricks.

BernieD: Thanks to all of you for coming. Hope to see you in a month on an unknown date on an unknown topic.

LaurieGuest3: Thanks, Bernie.

KatieC: thanks bernie...great ideas

BJ . o O (check your calendars for the date and time...and topic!)

CraigD: Yeah, thanks. It should be a late night exploring all the links you provided.

MarionGuest2: Thanks, Bernie. **See** you next month.

BernieD: OK... time to clear the room Good night all!