



TECHNOLOGIES TO TEACH THE THUMB GENERATION

A Report on
Collaboration, Education,
and the Future

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THUMB GENERATION”

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FOREWORD

The adoption of technologies in the educational arena has perennially lagged behind both the business and consumer markets. This lag in the adoption of new technologies in the classroom can be seen as a symptom of formal education being steeped in tradition and reluctant to embrace change.

There exists a reverence for old knowledge in academia; literary classics are held up as ideals and the philosophers of ancient Greece still impact our sense of humanity and our role in the world. It is natural that a system that values established and verified knowledge would be reluctant to embrace new tools and technologies, particularly those that challenge the way that knowledge itself is defined, created, and used.

In contrast, to remain competitive the business world has embraced technological advances in knowledge management, networking, and IT. Witness the number of chalkboards and overhead projectors in use in academia while on the enterprise side slide presentation tools (today in the form of PowerPoint presentations) have been around since the introduction of VCN ExecuVision in 1983.

Educators are now realizing two things, first, that to be competitive in the job market students must possess technology skills, and second, that the students themselves have fundamentally changed, and the traditional models of classroom learning must be upgraded accordingly.

In recent years there have been significant improvements in offerings geared specifically for the educational market. As students live an increasingly interactive digital life through social networking Web sites, mobile phones, IM, and chat, it is not only necessary to use these channels for educational purposes but to recognize that these present tremendous opportunities for interactive and collaborative learning.

Game shows have had audience response tools including LCD screens at audience seats for years; why couldn't the same be done in a lecture hall? It can and is being done, moving beyond the comparatively primitive hand raising that has been the staple classroom participatory activity since perhaps the dawn of time or at least formal schooling. Using audience

response tools allows for not only greater participation from students but a wealth of data for the educator about individual students and their responses.

For the presentation of lectures and information, the standard black or green chalkboard or whiteboard paired with a projector has proven its longevity in the classroom, but this is hopelessly out of date when compared with even the most basic digital interactive whiteboards. Some companies (including Basex) have had electronic white boards since the mid-1990s.

Why are such tools not ubiquitous in schools and universities? The market for these devices has grown to the point where there are now entry level packages designed specifically for education, easing the cost of transition, which perhaps has served as the largest entry barrier in this field.

Providing these technologies to students may be moot. Students now come equipped with their own screens. Be it an iPod, a smartphone, or a laptop, the chances that a student has some sort of LCD device on his person upon entering a classroom is fairly high. Students and businesses have something in common, they both know that embracing new technologies is in their interests, it now falls to the educational community to follow suit.

Why not leverage this and build upon it?

ABOUT BASEX

Basex is a knowledge economy research firm that serves IT vendors and buyers with an expertise in knowledge worker management and productivity.

A trusted advisor to some of the world's best-known companies, Basex provides holistic research and analysis across 22 market categories on leveraging Collaborative Business Environments, the workplace that supports new, organic ways for companies to conduct business.

With more than 24 years of trusted analysis and a range of time-tested offerings, Basex works to accomplish two simple, yet elusive goals: leverage knowledge assets and make the right IT decisions.



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