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The Horizon Report 2006

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The Horizon Report 2006 is a collaboration between the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative and is based on a research-oriented effort that seeks to identify and describe emerging technologies likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning, or creative expression in higher education within the next five years. The project uses qualitative research methods to identify interesting emerging technologies, including a survey of the work of other organizations, a review of the literature as well as discussions in a variety of settings with faculty, industry experts, campus technologists and the Horizon Advisory Board.

Four major trends emerged in this year's report:

- Dynamic knowledge creation and social computing tools and processes are becoming more widespread and accepted.
- Mobile and personal technology is increasingly being viewed as a delivery platform for services of all kinds.
- Consumers are increasingly expecting individualized services, tools, and experiences, and open access to media, knowledge, information, and learning.
- Collaboration is increasingly seen as critical across the range of educational activities, including intra- and inter-institutional activities of any size or scope.

In this year's report, for the first time critical challenges facing higher education over the next years were identified explicitely.

- Peer review and other academic processes, such as promotion and tenure reviews, increasingly do not re-flect the ways scholarship actually is conducted.
- Information literacy should not be considered a given, even among "net-gen" students.
- Intellectual property concerns and the management of digital rights and assets continue to loom as largely

unaddressed issues.

- The typical approach of experimentally deploying new technologies on campuses does not include processes to quickly scale them up to broad usage when they work, and often creates its own obstacles to full deployment.
- The phenomenon of technological “churn” is bringing new kinds of support challenges.Each new technology comes with its own requirements for support, while the support needs of established technologies remain as well.

In the main sections of the report six areas of emerging technology that will have significant impact in higher education within three adoption horizons over the next one to five years are discussed and illustrated by examples.

- Social Computing. The use of computer technology to facilitate interaction and collaboration promises to contribute to more effective knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, collaboration, learning, and collective decision-making.
- Personal Broadcasting. Personal broadcasting of audio and video material (e. g. podcasting to video blogging) is a natural outgrowth of a popular trend made possible by increasingly more capable portable tools.
- The Phones in Their Pockets. Cell phones, which are commonly carried by virtually every college student, have begun to feature many capabilities that initially were associated with other devices, such as e-mail, instant mes-saging, web browsing, web services, and now even video.
- Educational Gaming. A recent surge in interest in educational gaming has led to increased research into gaming and engagement theory, the effect of using games in practice, and the structure of cooperation in gameplay.
- Augmented Reality and Enhanced Visualization. These technologies for bringing large data sets to life have the potential to change the way we see the world by creating three-dimensional representations of abstract data.
- Context-Aware Environments and Devices. Advancements in context-aware computing are giving rise to devices and rooms that respond to voice, motion, or other subtle signals.[7ul]

In comparing this year's report with the preceding issues, it is notable that four of the topics (social computing, educational gaming, augmented reality, and context-aware environments) have managed to stay on this shortlist. It will be intresting to track the further deveopment of these "hot topics".

It would also be useful to investigate whether other key trends of the last years (e. g. intelligent searching) have managed to become part of everyday life or whether they didn't meet the expectations.