Transcript: The 2008 Horizon Report - an Australian perspective

July 2008

http://youtube.com/watch?v=wpwQLkvCz70

Education.au CEO Greg Black provides an Australian perspective on the four emerging technologies identified in the 2008 Horizon Report as being likely to enter the mainstream within the next few years.

Hi, I’m Greg Black, the CEO of Education.au limited.

Today I want to talk about emerging technologies and their potential use in learning and teaching.

Over the past 5 years there has been an international collaboration between the New Media Consortium and Educause that has produced a report called the Horizon Report which is a qualitative research document that makes an assessment about emerging technologies, their possible applications into education, and when that might occur.

Today I want to talk about the 2008 Horizon report and four of the key emerging trends that are stated there.

The access to this is through: www.nmc.org/horizon

1. Grassroots video

The first area of emerging technologies is what is being now called grassroots video. If you think about it, even a few years ago, video was something that you paid for, was developed by professionals, tended to be lengthy and was either a mix of video, entertainment, edutainment, or just plain music.

But the technology has moved on quite dramatically and today for very little, or really it’s almost free in most instances, individuals without any background can produce quite good video, that is easily uploadable to the web and so accessible by many people.

It’s become so popular that there are literally hundreds of millions of video clips produced every year with billions and billions of downloads. In terms of education I think the potential for this is enormous.

What we’re finding is what’s being produced by educators and students are small, short and specific videos that cover a wide range of areas from students’ work on projects through to teachers’ discussion about their pedagogy. We think there’s great potential for this in specifically in an Australian context and already we’re seeing in universities and the training sector a very significant take-up. Perhaps a bit less so in schools but it’s starting to occur.

In 2008 education.au limited will be working with the education sectors to find some
ways of providing support to teachers to help them use video in the most creative and positive ways.

2. Collaborative webs

The second area is in collaborative webs. This has got two components to it. One is purely and simply tools that educators can now use. Tools that allow people to establish a project, write a budget, create a story even. Simple things that are in text, in graphical presentation.

The second and related area, and the most exciting, is in group discussion, the group development of knowledge. Here in Australia we have seen some fantastic growth. At the national level, at education.au through edna Groups, there has been a dramatic increase in teachers using this simple technology to collaborate about areas of their interest. We now have over 1400 groups and something like 25,000 teachers who are regularly and actively collaborating and developing their interests, be it at a local, geographic level - right through to national collaborations on significant issues. We can only see in the future, this area continuing to grow and develop.

At education.au in 2008 we’re going to take this one step further by launching a new service which is effectively a professional facebook so that teachers are able to, in a professional context, share information, establish networks of friends and colleagues and develop areas of specific interest to them.

3. Mobile broadband

The third emerging technology is mobiles using broadband. And if you think about it there is over a billion new mobile devices produced and sold every year. In that kind of rich and deep market environment, it’s inevitable that there is going to be a dramatic and rapid level of innovation - and we’re seeing it.

I know myself having bought a new PDA that being able to use a mobile device to access your emails has advantages and perhaps disadvantages.

What we’re seeing though in education is fairly rapid uptake in the use of mobile devices, particularly in the VET sector where there are significant applications. There are many organisations that have a wide geographic spread, say across the whole of Australia, that provide either services or technical support, and they’re using mobile devices to provide field staff with that kind of technical support, training, manuals, good access to immediate communications.

More and more so, we are also seeing use of mobile devices in schools and universities. A good example in schools has been the use of mobiles as data recorders for fieldwork and field trips. So that students can generate the information, bring it back into the classroom, upload it, use it, edit it and put it together with other information to create a report.

So, it’s still probably early days with the use of mobiles, and there’s certainly a number of technical issues for institutions to deal with, but nevertheless a great deal of potential.

4. Mashups

Finally, the fourth emerging technology is what’s loosely called mashups. What this means is that there is technology now freely available to access and integrate disparate
sets of data and information.

In an education setting, the most important applications to date have been around putting together a major data collection and then searching for a particular characteristic, particularly geography.

To give an example of this: If a teacher had decided on a project for students to study say, the Sydney Harbour Bridge. What we can now do with advanced search and mashups, is search for data on the web on Sydney Harbour Bridge, provide a locational map for it and also even establish a search through time sequencing so that there can be data immediately accessed and available about the building of the bridge, its opening and what its current use is today.

I believe, that as in the commercial world, the potential applications of mashups in learning and teaching are as broad and deep, and only really limited by people’s creativity and interest.

During the course of 2008, education.au limited will be working with the Horizon consortium to make sure that in future that important document has an Australian context to it, and also some really good and powerful Australian examples of work in these areas of emerging technologies.

Thank you.