

# FACEBOOK AS A LEARNING TOOL

Implications for ubiquitous learning

# Introducing Facebook

- Finally, I don't have to explain it's a big deal
- Structures and functions (overlapping)
  - ▣ Identity and affiliation (profile, groups, pages, tags)
  - ▣ Communication (events, wall, messages, status, chat)
  - ▣ Multimedia sharing (pictures, video, apps)
  - ▣ Applications (multipurpose)
- LOTS of people. Arguably still powerfully oriented by the youth audiences. Possible demographic issues, though.

# Social norms of the system

- Interface encouraged norms
  - ▣ Connecting and sharing (language, generally open, share functions – outgoing and incoming, common interests, sharing multimedia, feedback mechanisms everywhere!)
  - ▣ Activity and involvement (recent activities, memberships and affiliations, tagging within multimedia and notes)
  - ▣ Content vs. form (character limits, western style, given navigation options and colors, refresh rates on walls, EULA)
- Offline community norms
  - ▣ Relationships to other people (authority, friends, etc...)
  - ▣ FBP studies (gender, the Chief, race/ethnicity)
  - ▣ Availability of information?
- What motivations do people bring to the system?

# Enter Ubiquitous Learning

- Well, what is learning?
  - ▣ Acquiring new knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, preferences or understandings
  - ▣ Processing information, may be termed 'education' or 'personal development'
  - ▣ Conscious and unconscious, habitual and through play, structured or unstructured
- Predicated on Ubiquitous Computing (network effects; population-specific)
- New opportunities for learning
  - ▣ New environments (altered place; distance)
  - ▣ New teachers (direction of information; authority)
  - ▣ New timelines (a-synchronous, in-demand)

# Facebook as an educational tool?

## □ Advantages

- Massive and “assumed” (near-ubiquitous) user base
- 0\$
- Range of tools (groups, media, events, pages, apps, chat, integrated information sharing)
- Relatively fast deployment, reduced community management (information handling, abuse)

## □ Dangers

- Data ownership
- Blurred lines of information sharing
- Kids... and parents
- Issues for evaluation and research
- Social only?

# Social aspects of Web2.0, again!

## □ **Information Access in a Networked World**

- Osmosis
- Pull
- Push

## □ **Digital Literacy**

- Play
- Performance
- Simulation

□ Appropriation

□ Multitasking

□ Distributed Cognition

□ Collective Intelligence

□ Judgment

□ Transmedia Navigation

□ Networking

□ Negotiation

# What can we learn from literature?

- **Social capital** - Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2006).
- **Student-teacher relationships** - Mazer, Murphy and Simonds (2007).
- **Use in education institutions** – Fred Stutzman’s material (many references, 2005-2009), National School Boards Association (2007)
- **Applications in libraries** – Laurie Bridges (2007)
- **Participation differences** – Eszther Hargittai (2007), Mayer and Puller (2007), boyd (many references, 2005-2009)
- Gauntlet of researchers on **privacy and data sharing** (far too many to name, see Facebook Project resource list)
- Growing number of researchers on **youth and community engagement** (Lampe, boyd, MacArthur series on digital learning)

# Ideas for learning!

## □ **Creative application use**

- Mapping tools
- Competitive learning games (words, typing, problem-solving)
- Instructor feedback systems (rate my professor, class evaluations)

## □ **Information needs**

- Search Google, search YouTube, search Facebook
- Website replacement
- Not Yahoo Answers but Facebook Answers

## □ **Mobilizing people**

- Political engagement and discourse
- Cause awareness and agent activation

## □ **Classroom project ideas**

- Design an application for FB (social engineering, advertising, sociology, etc...)
- Easy environment for social research (group content analysis, survey deployment, etc...)

## □ **In the workplace**

- New-age resume framework
- Advertising platform (?)
- Customer data