

Glossary

Blog

A Web site that features regular, dated entries (as in a journal) using text, graphics, video and/or audio posted by an individual or small group of authors. Blogs come in countless varieties, including news journalism, personal journals and musings on topical themes. Blogs can be used to help connect students to class themes, communicate with each other and the teacher and make course content relevant beyond the classroom.

Mashup

A media product that combines and/or manipulates video, audio, text, images and/or designs from two or more sources to create a new work. For example, a political mashup video might combine news footage of candidate speeches with a pop song and some other video to create new commentary. Analyzing and creating mashups are good ways to heighten students' ability to recognize how media messages are constructed for different audiences and for different purposes.

Podcast

A podcast is a digital media file, usually audio or video, that can be played on a computer or portable media players (MP3 players, mobile phones). Podcasts are often made available regularly for periodic distribution through subscriptions. Students who make podcasts for school projects can share their work using portable devices and post it to their blog, school Web site, or other Web site.

RSS

RSS (Real Simple Syndication) is a way to feed Web sites that publish frequently (such as blogs, news, podcasts) into one's computer, Web site, or portable media player (MP3 player, mobile phone). RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favorite web sites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. An RSS document, which is called a "feed," "web feed," or "channel," contains either a summary of content from an associated Web site or the full text.

Social media

Social media integrate technology, social interaction and the construction of shared meanings and experiences from many different users. Social media users create content, share various perspectives, swap favorites, tell stories and make comments using words, pictures, video and audio. Unlike traditional media that use technologies as conduits to deliver meanings and experiences, social media focus on people's interactions with each other and with media texts as shared experiences. Social media also provide many students with venues for asserting and developing their identities, tastes and values through their media messages and interactions.

Social networking sites

A social networking site allows users to join communities of people who share interests and activities, or to explore the interests and activities of others. Most sites allow users to create profiles or self-description pages, which often include pictures, video, music, text and a variety of design elements. Some educators encourage students to build profiles that include academic interests, achievements, representations and discussions, and help students connect with groups interested in course content.

Tag

A tag is a keyword that attaches to a text or media file on a Web site, which can be used to organize and find. Many Web sites feature a list of tags or a "tag cloud" that shows all of the keywords used to organize the content.

User-generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) refers to text, audio, video and applications created by users who post their work to Internet sites produced by others.

Vlog

A vlog is a "video blog," which often involves an individual speaking directly into a camera.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 refers to Internet sites and applications that facilitate creativity, interaction, collaboration, participation and data-sharing between users and producers (as opposed to Web sites that simply display information). Web 2.0 emphasizes community by incorporating wikis, social networking, tagging, RSS, and other tools.

Widget

A widget is any tool or piece of code that can be embedded within a web page. It allows a user to display content from someone else's Web site on his or her site.