

## The Impact of Weblogs on Contemporary Pedagogy: Rss Feeds as an Example

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate how Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds can describe weblogs on contemporary pedagogy, and how to integrate these into a single simplified representation of the organizational knowledge. To achieve the goals of the study, it adopted qualitative approach. Therefore, the research discussed the characteristics of RSS feeds search service. The results indicated that maintain student engagement outside the traditional classroom environment. Ensuring that they receive the intended feedback in time can be a challenging issue. Therefore, RSS architecture provided the students with the opportunity to share information with their peers, professors, and their real-world clients.

**Keywords:** Weblogs, RSS feeds, technology acceptance model, eLearning.

### Introduction

Blogs are the common word to describe a weblog or a website where people post thoughts and information about news or topics of interests. As contended by Hernandez (2004), Blogs have been designed to provide a simple way for individuals to post ideas to internet in order for others to be able to read and post their comments on the site. Several concerned bodies have identified RSS including Really Simple Syndication, Rich Site Summary, Real-time Simple Syndication and others where it has been noticed that this has led to a profound increase in resorting to eLearning environment. ELearning in educational institutions includes blended learning, Moodle/Blackboard, but as stated by Nerantzi (2012); Padilla-Meléndez et al. (2013); Dalol (2014), among others; such devices do not replace traditional classroom teaching techniques rather, they support and back up such techniques and help students to easily access their educational needs. In the other hand, Lan and Sie (2010) and Ma (2012) contend that lack of portability and pervasiveness of such system may have a negative impact on peer interaction, resource acquirement and content delivery. Contrary to this opinion and despite such shortcomings, some scholars believe that these web-based learning systems integrate RSS and provide learners with a means to promptly receive updates by using any internet-enabled device (West et al., 2006). Going along with what West et al., say, other scholars as Samper et al., (2008); Bourset et al., (2010); and De La Torre-Diez et al., (2013) confirm what RSS as an XML format is used and employed to syndicate and share content on the web. In addition, it is used to frequently spread updated and personalized information among users subscribed to the source of content. Within this context, RSS is also viewed to have been helpful to improve students' research and make them able to easily access compilation of relevant research references as stated by Asmus et al. (2005); Liu, Liao and part (2009), among others.

Consequently, RSS feeds is necessarily viewed as a means of providing portability and ubiquity to virtual and aspired learning environments where dissemination of new information will definitely have an impact on pedagogy in general. The research aims to investigate the impact of weblogs on contemporary pedagogy RSS feeds as an example.

### The state of the problem

RSS is viewed helpful for improving students' research, and in the same time enable to easily access compilation of relevant research moreover, provide students with ability to view the new information which influences pedagogy .

Based upon the research problem is an attempt to answer the following question "Is there any impact of weblogs on contemporary pedagogy, RSS Feeds as an example?"

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### **Capabilities of RSS feeds**

Due to the belief that Blogging is an effective process when applied in the classroom, scholars like (Poling, 2005) and (Huffaker, 2004) think that it enhances students' comprehension and their will to further communicate with each other in addition to their becoming more aware of the curriculum. As for teachers, they will also feel that they help promoting literacy and creating bonds between students, parents and teachers where they meet to discuss and assess ideas and topics related to the learning process and levels of the achievement fulfilled. Furthermore, teachers also believe that blogs can fulfill where outcomes whereby they develop ideas and stimulate feedback from their students who in return, will get motivated to write and reflect more (Clyde, 2005).

Combining blog and RSS technologies can be of great help in pre-service program in general and in pre-service teachers' programs in particular. In this regard, and for widening the scope of such technologies, personal web publishing or blogging open ways for the individuals to share their ideas with the community outside their classrooms (Martinate and Wiley, 2005).

Thus, student teachers can meet with other groups of teachers where they reflect on their own learning, exchange ideas and reciprocate teaching strategies from such groups whose members are either "in the trenches" as teachers or in pre-service programs. Consequently, such an opportunity for student teachers to communicate and meet with other groups and that it is helpful, goes along with what Dicky (2005) reports about using blogs in pre-service course and its importance in helping students prevent feelings of isolation and alienation. Not only that, but by subscribing to relevant RSS feeds, pre-service teachers are able to keep abreast of the latest emerging trends in education in general and in their field in particular. Accordingly, being exposed to ideas which are not dispersed by the traditional media, gives students the chance of having more and more involvement in different discussions and ideas, (Kajder, Bull, & Van Noy, 2004).

RSS feeds enjoy the ability to perform in a variety of educational settings where technology-driven students are provided with a plethora of opportunities to chart their individual plans of study. Due to the fact that contents published in RSS feeds are immediately available to those connected with the internet, with benefits of RSS in the Classrooms are endless. As contended by Cold (2006), RSS feeds give students and educators alike the ability to skim the newest and most relevant contents promptly. This fact relates to the distribution of course related materials to keep up with recent research and the course related topics and objectives. Though educators aspire and look for a breakthrough in the information technology (IT) in order to increase classroom productivity, some scholars like Gillard, Bailey and Nolan (2008) argue that this breakthrough is often deterred by the time it would take to implement or by the cost technology or such a solution.

RSS feeds are also helpful in the educational domain where both teachers and students become able to access and gather multiple sources on one page. This ability, as contended by Asmus et al. (2005) can help carrying out in-depth research by the two sides. Going along with this line of argumentation, Cold (2006) confirm the importance of conducting research individually or collaboratively by sharing and combining feeds across various source. RSS feeds also play a vital role in the research process by notifying subscribers and the ability to save the latest and recent posting of information and current events. Not only that, but they are compared with the process of conducting research 24 hours a day for seven days a week. Thus, it is believed by Richardson (2005) as if they do the entire work of a researcher. As a result, the use of RSS feed in classroom gives students and teachers the opportunity to work within a collaborative learning atmosphere and enhances cooperation and communication between them which in turn, will result in creating new networks of literacy and knowledge. Furthermore, the availability of a variety of resources in an easily accessible location together with sharing RSS will definitely create large repositories of knowledge that are of great importance and help to all users and subscribers (D'Souza, 2006).

As contended by West et al. (2006), RSS are able to keep track of discussions, topics, wikis, newsgroups, interests and website updates in addition to building connections with those of the same interests. This, in turn, will result in helping students obtain more profound understanding of the presented concepts in particular, and the materials beyond what is presented in the classroom in general. Such an atmosphere is viewed as a dynamic learning process which is aspired and desired by both educators and students.

### Study Objectives

The study aims to investigate the impact of Weblogs on contemporary pedagogy RSS feeds as an example and how to integrate these into a single simplified representation of the organizational knowledge. Thus, the investigation of the potential impact of weblogs on pedagogy may offer new views in this regard.

### Study Significance

The study is an extension to the literature in providing additional information about the Weblogs. The research contributes through using the qualitative approach. The success in this context depends foremost on Weblogs quality. The study importance is due to research topic that it tackles the impact of Weblogs on contemporary pedagogy: RSS feeds as an example. Moreover, the research is important since some concerned parties can benefit from the obtained results. In addition the research is one of the rare researches according to the researcher best knowledge. The research results may benefit those who are concerned and future researcher.

### The Technology Acceptance Model (ATM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been developed by Davis (1989) and based on the Theory Reasoned Action (TRA) which is relevant to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). TRA assumption is that the individual behavior and intent is a reflection of her/his attitude toward the behavior and its perspectives. The behavioral intention is determined by subjective norms i.e. the behavior is the outcome of all the attitudes and beliefs of the individual (Masrom, 2007; Tarhinet al. 2014a).

For Davis (1989), TAM can provide an explanation of the motives behind computer acceptance, but though it can also explain user behavior through a broad range of end-user computing technologies and user population, it is both parsimonious and theoretically justified. On the other hand, Venkatesh et al. (2003) argues that TAM presumes that behavioral intention (BI) is usually formed as a result of conscious decision-making processes. As for Davis (1989) and Davis et al. (1989) this involves three key variables as shown in (Figure 1): perceived usefulness (PU); perceived ease of use (PEOU); and attitude towards using (ATT). The TAM postulate that PEOU and PU predict ATT, behavioral intention (BI) is predicted by the user's attitude (ATT), and the actual use of the system is predicted by BI. In addition, they believe that PEOU has a significant influence on PU.

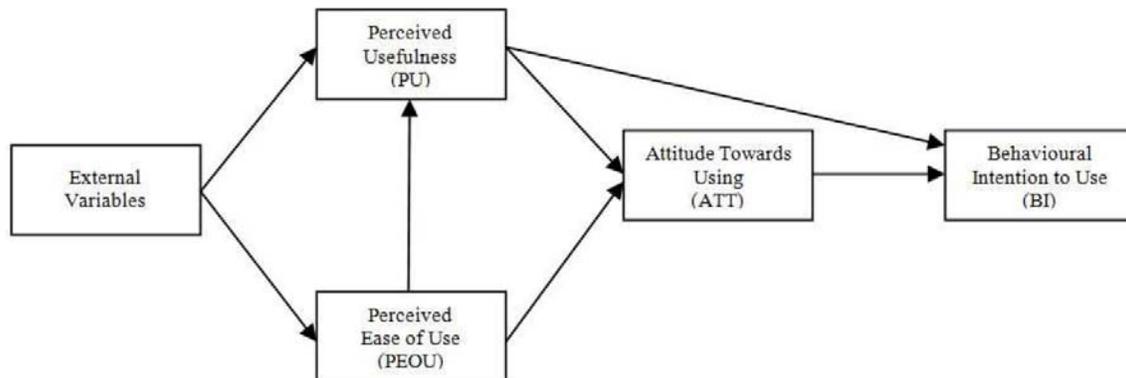


Figure 1: The Technology Acceptance Model (Adapted from Venkatesh et al., 2003)

### Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU)

As Davis et al. (1989) put it, perceived usefulness (PU) is a predictor that measures individuals' beliefs about the use of a certain technology and whether that technology system helps improve their performance or not. Perceived usefulness (PU) is used in this study to investigate students' beliefs as regards their making use of using the Blackboard's System as well as to predict and find out their beliefs of using RSS on the Blackboard System. Opting for this factor in the research has come as result of its direct influence on the user's attitude, and as a result of the so many studies that focus on such factors and its closely related issue i.e. the behavioral intention towards using the system (Teo et al., 2008; and Hsu, 2014) among others.

As for perceived ease of use (PEOU), it is also viewed by Davis (1989) to be a predictor that measures individuals' beliefs towards the use of a certain technology system with no effort made i.e. easily and promptly. The PEOU is also opted for in this study to investigate students' attitudes regarding using the Blackboard's system free of effort in addition to predict students' intentions regarding the use of RSS on the Blackboard system.

It is assumed by TAM that the PEOU and PU are able to predict the user's attitude towards ATT system whereby it is expected that users with high level of PU are more likely to have positive attitudes about using technology. Similarly, users with high level of PEOU are also expected to show and induce positive attitudes. In addition, as contended by Davis (1989), PU has been found to mediate the effect of PEOU on attitude i.e. PEOU has an indirect impact on attitude through PU.

#### **Attitude Towards Using (ATT)**

Being determined as predictor that investigates individuals' attitudes towards using a certain technology, ATT has been taken up by various studies where PU, PEOU and ATT when incorporated, they are supported by these studies. In light of their relationship, they are of great importance toward using and adopting such modes of technology. Cheng, Lam and Yeung (2006); Yu et al. (2005); Tarhini, Hone and Liu (2013b), among others see and believe in such an importance in positively improving the users' attitudes toward using them. Going along with this line of argument, Gao (2005), in his study 'Educational Hypermedia' underlined the significant effect on the intention to use ATT where it has a direct effect on the users.

More recently, Teo and Noyes (2014) confirmed what Gao (2005) says and that using ATT has an effect on the intention to use, but such effect is of varying degrees of effectiveness depending on the field of study, sample or techniques used for analysis. Contrary to what Gao (2005) and Teo and Noyes (2014) say, Masrom (2007) found in her study "leaning Online" that attitude toward using ATT does not have a direct and significant effect on the intention to use. Such controversy has risen due to the fact that the term 'attitude' itself has too broad an interpretation where it could be directed towards many different facts of using a system as 'attitude towards features', 'attitude towards purpose' or 'attitude towards benefit' where the latter forms the focus of this study.

#### **Behavioral Intention (BI)**

Behavioral intention in TAM is the major difference holding between TAM and TRA where behavioral intention is considered an immediate antecedent of usage behavior and an indication about the individual's readiness to perform a specific behavior. Within TAM, both PU and PEOU influence an individual's intention to use technology and reflect her/his attitude towards that use.

As previously shown, the related literature shows a strong support to the relationship between PU, PEOU and ATT on behavioral intention however, some scholars as Zang, Zaho and Tan (2008); Ti-Cheng et al., (2007); Park (2009); and Liu et al., (2010) focus on the context of e-learning in specific. Here, it is worth noting that the actual usage (AU) of the system has been excluded from this study due to the fact that it is a challenging task to track the individual users, based on the available server system logs. It is also a challenge because RSS feeds are available without requiring a login to facilitate ease of access. Consequently, it was impossible to distinguish between individual mobile devices with the available data. Therefore, it has been deemed appropriate to only measure the behavioral intention.

#### **Related Learning Theories**

Learning theory refers to a framework that helps us think about how and why change (in learning) occurs (Smith, 1999). A review of the literature shows that there are different orientations and approaches to explaining how this process of learning takes place, for example, behaviorist, cognitivist, humanistic, social/situational and the connectivist approaches to learning. Broadly speaking, in the education literature, there is reference to four theories of learning, namely, Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism and Connectivism. In Behaviorism knowledge is perceived as facts that can be transferred from teacher to student (can be related to eLearning 1.0). Cognitivism opens up the box of the mind, considering the learner as an information processor whereas Constructivism suggests that learners create knowledge as they try to make meaning of their experiences. Connectivism, considered to be the learning theory of the digital age, according to Siemens (2004) is, "a successor to behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism." These theories of learning

are briefly described in Table 1, in terms of the view learning process, locus of learning and purpose of education; Table 1 is adapted from Ashworth et al. (2004) adding a column to relate with the connectivist approach (Siemens, 2004).

**Table 1. Summary of learning theories (adapted from Ashworth et al., 2004; Siemens, 2004)**

Theories of Learning				
Aspect	Behaviorist	Cognitivist	Constructivist	Connectivist
Learning Theories	Skinner, Pavlov	Bruner, Kohler, Piaget	Bandura, Vgotsky	Siemens, Downes
View of the learning process	Change in behavior	Internal mental processes	Construction of meaning from experience	Connecting specialized information sets
Locus of learning	Stimuli in external environment	Internal cognitive structuring	Internal construction of reality by individual	Draw information outside our primary knowledge
Purpose of education	Produce behavioral change in desired direction	Develop capacity and skills to learn better	Construct knowledge	Ability to synthesize and recognize connections

Connectivism applies ideas from biological models of the brain to neural networks in machine learning; starting its basic principles as follows (Siemens, 2004):

- Learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions.
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.
- Learning may reside in non-human appliances.
- Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas and concepts is a cover skill.
- Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.

The simple approach has been taken in this paper to examine the important principles of the connectivist theory of learning as stated by Siemens (2004) and then look at the new technologies which will be introduced as a result of the advancements in the web technologies, thus compare and relate which technological shift may be supported by the principles of the connectionist learning theory.

#### **Previous Studies**

Kelly (2008) study explores the impact of blogging on the affective conditions of an undergraduate academic writing course for second language students. Quantitative results suggest that under the conditions of this study, blogging does not influence participants' affective conditions to the extent that overall performance is improved. The research results, , indicate that students associated improvements in writing with using blogs, and that students associate their positive sense of class community with using blogs

Buripakdi (2017) aims to investigate the impact of digital technology on English learners. And to investigate the use of business weblogs in students' English learning, writing ability, and artistic performance in a Thai college .Data were drawn from classroom. 48 students were asked to design a project called 'Your blog is your brand. The study concluded I that the project enhanced students' writing ability and allowed them to 'design' their own learning and practice their language skills. This study showed that weblog technology yields a number of advantages in language classrooms and constitutes a contemporary English curriculum in the digital landscape.

Abusaidi and Al-Hajeri (2013) study aimed at investigation the estimation of the importance of pedagogical content knowledge in science from the perspective of a sample of teachers in the Sultanate of Oman. The study sample consisted of (102) science teachers. The study used a questionnaire. The study results indicated that significant differences in the

science teachers' estimation of science pedagogical content knowledge due to their gender proposed.

Maher and Ibrahim (2010) study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of instructional software on developing expressive language among students with mild hearing impairment in light of gender (male, female), and age (4-5, 5-6, 6-7). The study sample consisted of (30) students. The study used Picture Articulation Test prepared by Al-Amayyereh (1998) and the instructional software for articulation training for developing expressive language developed by the researchers. The study results indicated significant differences were found in students' performance in the post-test in expressive language levels, indicating the effectiveness of the instructional software in developing expressive language among mild hearing impairment students. The findings also indicated that there were no significant differences found due to gender and age.

Ismaiel (2012) study aimed at identifying the impact of computerized educational games in the development of imagination skill of the kindergarten students in Badia of north-east Jordan. The study sample consisted (31) kindergarten students, as experimental group and (25) kindergarten students as control group. The study developed computer software to be used in the study, prepared an educational program, and developed an imagination development test. The study results showed that while there were statistically significant differences between the study groups in the development of imagination skill in favor of the experimental group, and there were no statistically significant differences between them due to the sex of students.

Ali and Khalid (2010) study aimed at investigating the effect of using internet/ computer learning technique on tenth grade students' achievement in geography subject in Jordan and their attitudes towards it. The study designed a computerized material and applied on the study sample which consisted of (80) students. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant differences attributed to the application of the computerized material in favor of the experimental group. The difference between the experimental group and the control group in attitudes was statistically significant and in favor of the experimental one.

### **Methodology**

The study used the qualitative approach. It reviewed the available literature review that handles the research topic. Unfortunately, no local previous studies were found, so the research depends only the foreign available previous studies to analyze the impact of Weblog on pedagogy.

### **Results and discussions**

The study found that adoption of e-learning models should consider the nature of technology where perceptions vary in terms of locations; an educational technology that has been developed and perceived in one location may not necessarily be perceived and applied in another. This is due to a range of potential cultural, socio-economic and national differences that affect behavioral intention as regards using technology as a supporting means within the educational domain.

In addition, The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as an evaluate model can be adopted when investigating the use of educational technologies in the developing nations.

Moreover, RSS feeds are widely used and ubiquitous in various advertising sites and by different organizations, their use in education entails the problem of low acceptance and usage as contended by Cold (2006).

Despite this fact, RSS feeds face a high degree of resistance to use or accept due to the asynchronous nature of interaction where it becomes a challenge to motivate self-regulated learning beyond the traditional classroom environment as stated by Park (2009). Thus, as the prevailing belief in the fact that RSS feeds have an impact on the entire process of pedagogy. The study found that students' attitudes towards the benefits they get must be encouraged and enhanced to make the learning environment more helpful and attracting.

### **Recommendations**

There is a need for practitioner and policy makers to better understand the factors that influence the adoption of RSS as an important means of conveying information. Besides, students should be oriented and taught e-Learning devices starting with their first steps of schooling where they get used to adopting such devices throughout, the entire teaching process which takes them to university levels.

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## أثر الملخص الوافي للموقع في التربية المعاصرة

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### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على كيفية وصف الملخص الوافي للموقع للمدونات الالكترونية على التربية المعاصرة وعلى كيفية وضعه ضمن إطار معرفي موحد ومبسط للمعرفة التنظيمية. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف استخدمت الدراسة المنهج النوعي. قدمت الدراسة خصائص خدمة البحث عن أثر الملخص الوافي للموقع، تكوينها كنص، وكيفية توسيع التجربة الصفية لتشمل توفير مادة تعليمية في كل الأوقات وفي كل الأماكن وبأشكال مختلفة. على أية حال، قد يكون من الصعب مواصلة إشراك الطلبة في أنشطة خارج غرفة الصف وضمان حصولهم على تغذية راجعة فورية تساعدهم على أداء تلك الواجبات بشكل مستمر. لذا فإن تصميم أثر الملخص الوافي للموقع يتيح للطلبة فرصة تبادل المعلومات مع أقرانهم ومدرسيهم إضافة إلى أشخاص آخرين يتعاملون معهم في عالمهم الواقعي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** المدونات، الملخص الوافي للموقع، التعليم الإلكتروني.

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