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G3 

Do higher education institutions need a Digital Passport?

Dr David Parsons, The Mind Lab by Unitec, Auckland

Biography

Dr David Parsons is currently National Postgraduate Director for The Mind lab by Unitec, running a large-scale postgraduate programme for in-service teachers across New Zealand. He has 30 years of experience as a teacher, academic, practitioner and researcher in ICT, with a particular emphasis on ICT in education. He holds a Masters degree in Electronics and Computer Science and a PhD in Information Technology, and has worked internationally as an ICT consultant and trainer for many technology organisations including IBM and Oracle. Prior to joining The Mind Lab by Unitec, he was Associate Professor of Information Technology at Massey University. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning* and author and editor of a number of books on computer programming, web application development and technology enhanced learning. He is a Certified Member of the Association for Learning Technologies.

Abstract

Governments across the developed world are grappling with the issue of how digital skills fit into their national curricula. While computing specialisations in higher education have had subject-specific curricula for decades, the increasing proliferation of digital tools into wider society raises serious questions for how higher education institutions will teach future cohorts of students. Internationally, school curricula have been evolving to integrate digital skills in two somewhat different ways. On the one hand, there is the traditional specialisation curriculum where a minority of students specialise in high level learning about ICT and specific skills such as coding.

On the other hand, and increasingly debated, is the concept of the entitlement curriculum, whereby all students are provided with learning experiences that involve the integration of digital technologies across the broader curriculum, reflecting the way that these technologies are used across wider society, beyond the walls of the classroom. So far, higher education has largely been able to ignore these fundamental social changes by integrating Wi-Fi networks and student-owned devices into the old models of teaching and learning. However, the changes taking place in the schools that feed students into higher education cannot be ignored forever. In this presentation we will take a look at the recently introduced New Zealand digital curriculum, what this means for New Zealand school students over the next three years, and what it might mean for higher education a few years later. The Mind Lab by Unitec has addressed the implications of this new curriculum by creating its Digital Passport programme, made freely available to teachers through a charitable trust.

It is intended to enable all teachers in New Zealand to be prepared to teach the new digital curriculum. This Digital Passport captures the essence of the entitlement curriculum in a set of online resources. It also, therefore, provides a road map to the skills and capabilities that future students entering higher education in New Zealand will have. The question we raise in this session is; if teaching staff in higher education need to upskill in the pedagogical use of digital technologies to better serve their future students, what entitlement curriculum would a higher education digital passport need to address? We will provide some ideas from our experience of creating the Digital Passport for schools to suggest what a higher education Digital Passport might look like, and what value it could provide to teachers and learners.

G4

Only TOGETHER can we achieve successful complex facilities!

Christina Coleiro, University of South Australia, Warwick Stannus, AG Coombs Advisory, David Tiller, Hansen Yuncken, Peter Vickery, O'Connor Services, Julien Pachot, KBR

Biography

Christina Coleiro, a Senior Project Manager at UniSA, is committed to collaborative project delivery. She is a strong advocate for well commissioned buildings and in providing appropriate support during the occupation phase.

Warwick Stannus is Group Engineering Manager, responsible for Engineering and Technical Development across the A.G. Coombs Group of Companies. Warwick provides Design Management, Independent Commissioning Agent (ICA) and Building Information modelling (BIM) advisory project services.