

**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**  
**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

## Abstracts

*Mobile practices in everyday life: the opportunities and challenges for learning*, Guy Merchant, Sheffield Hallam University (UK)

Early images of computing depict lab-coated scientists - usually white males - in room-sized environments surrounded by large cabinets, spools of tape and coils of wire. In recent years the development of powerful and affordable pocket-sized devices, such as smartphones, has been remarkably rapid. The idea of the computer, processing huge databanks of information, housed in a room, in a place one went to, has given way to the seemingly straightforward everyday social and portable use of technology. The ubiquity of these devices often numbs us to their novelty. Practice theory (Shatzki, 2002) helps us to understand how mobile devices have been incorporated into day-to-day life. Using this perspective, the presentation will examine the place of the mobile in social networking and give a critical overview of how educators have begun to explore the uses of mobiles in educational settings.

*Barriers to Web 2.0 transfer*, Charles Crook, University of Nottingham (UK)

It is often claimed that young peoples' recreational engagement with the 'participatory web' should be a strong force to encourage the appropriation of web2.0 tools into the classroom. Some findings from a project on engagement with web2.0 by secondary school students will be outlined. This research suggests that while the central dispositions associated with using web2.0 services are certainly apparent within out-of-school activities, the nature of how those dispositions are configured in recreational contexts contrasts with how they are invoked within classroom contexts. This suggests a need for more careful consideration as to how to achieve the possible continuities between outside-school and inside-school internet experience.

*'Recognising' learning*, Gunther Kress, Institute of Education (UK)

'Learning', as a concept, is a social construct. Conceptions of 'learning' are socially shaped and reflect social assumptions: what learning is, where it happens, the degree to which learning is achieved in a particular environment, what a learner *is*, and so on. Changes in social configurations and consequent changes in theoretical accounts - and means - reconfigure all of these.

In my talk I focus on two such changes. One is a change in conceptions and distributions of 'agency': who is assumed to act? how are actions in learning seen? whose actions are recognized - accorded recognition, acknowledged and valued? The other change focuses on the material means through which we are used to recognize learning: how and where and when is learning seen to become (materially) evident. Both involve changes in recognition. If something is not or cannot be talked about, written or drawn, or be represented numerically, then how do we find evidence of learning, how do we establish 'signs of learning'?



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

These are social issues, due to *social* changes, independent to a large extent of changes in technologies of representation, production and dissemination. However, the increasingly dominant digital technologies in this domain provide facilities which amplify these social tendencies and therefore give such questions an insistence, intensity and prominence that makes it essential to develop accounts which give due recognition to *both* agency and the material 'means' through which learning becomes evident. 'Multimodality' offers to provide one set of tools for the recognition of 'means'; a social semiotic account of learning and meaning offers another set of tools for the recognition of agency as semiotic work. In exemplification of these points I will use data from several research projects, mostly not involving 'the digital' - so that the work of 'translation' is left to my audience.

*Online people tagging: Social Mobile Networking Services in Work-based Learning*, John Cook, London Metropolitan University, and Norbert Pachler, Institute of Education, University of London (UK)

Social and mobile technologies offer users unprecedented opportunities for communicating, interacting, sharing, meaning-making, content and context generation etc. And, these affordances are in constant flux driven by a powerful interplay between technological innovation and emerging cultural practices. Significantly, also, they are starting to transcend the everyday lifeworlds of users and permeate the workplace and its practices. The focus of this paper, therefore, will be on a medium sized research and development project in the area of online people tagging in work-based contexts, MATURE (social learning in work-based knowledge networks). The project has taken a participatory, educational design research approach to investigate how social media can mediate "informal learning" in the workplace. The paper will initially provide a critical overview of key issues from the literature on social (mobile) networking services. It will then introduce an extend a typology of informal workplace learning (Eraut, 2004) that takes into account our review of social mobile networking services. We then provide an outline the characteristics of people tagging in digital social networks in MATURE and how the concepts can be seen to relate to each other, using a recent evaluation study to illustrate aspects of our extended typology. The paper will conclude by exploring tentative implications for work-based (work-located) learning of people tagging.

*Mobile and networked learning and knowledge sharing for Careers Information, Advice and Guidance*, Graham Attwell, Pontydysgu, Educational Research Institute, and Sally Anne Barnes, Jenny Bimrose, Alan Brown, Maria Perifanou (UK)

Careers education and guidance has always stood on the edge between formal and informal learning. On the one hand, the UK has developed services for providing advice and guidance to young people around careers options, both in and out of school. On the other hand, repeated studies have pointed to the influence of parents and peers in careers choices and trajectories. Increased uncertainty and insecurity in employment and careers due to the changing modes of production and to the economic recession has coincided with changes in the way people access careers information through new technologies and to cuts in service provision. This has led to increased interest in how new technologies including web 2.0 and social software can be



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

used as part of the careers guidance process. This paper will examine the emergence of such uses of new technologies including searching for and evaluating information about careers using new technologies and changing ideas on how careers services can be provided through those technologies.

As such, it is not exclusively focused on mobile technologies, preferring instead to view mobile technologies as part of the spectrum or ecology of how young people access information and guidance through increasingly ubiquitous connectivity. Furthermore, the paper considers 'mobile' as a dimension of the context in which information and guidance is accessed (and the implications of this) rather than as a function of the technology itself.

It also considers what are called career adaptability competences necessary for managing careers within the life course and the relation of these competencies to the use of (mobile) technologies..

The paper is based on a series of research studies including focus groups with young people on their use of technology for careers guidance, ethnographically informed research carried out in careers organizations, studies on the use of Web 2.0 and mobile technologies for carriers guidance and work carried out for UKCES on labor market information communications and technologies (ICT) and information, advice and guidance. The research suggests that although Web 2.0 has changed the way people interact and has profound implications, potentially, for the delivery of guidance, it has barely begun to impact on the way guidance services are delivered. The need to begin to align new technologies with service delivery is becoming more urgent.

The paper looks at a number of pilot activities, undertaken with different careers services in the UK to develop mobile, technologically enhanced services for both providing information and advice to young people and providing support, professional development, knowledge sharing and knowledge maturing for careers professionals. In so doing, it looks at both the individual practices and community spaces in mobile networked learning for careers professionals and work based learning in informal contexts for continuing professional development.

*Cultivating professional communities of teachers and practitioners through Social Networking Sites*, Maria Ranieri, Department of Education, University of Florence, Stefania Manca, Institute of Educational Technology (ITD-CNR), and Antonio Fini, Department of Education, University of Florence (IT)

Social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook or MySpace are mainly represented as "places of entertainment", where people – especially children and teenagers - leave multimedia traces of their daily lives and cultivate their relationships. This picture is mostly true, but another story is emerging from SNSs. It tells us that a growing number of adults are joining SNSs for work-related reasons, thus suggesting to reconsider some common places and inviting to explore more deeply the uses of SNSs by professionals. This paper provides an original contribution to the field by exploring pathways of social networks uses within professional communities, with a special attention to groups of teachers. Within the wider context of the social network theory, it analyzes motivations and aims of a range of SNSs groups and attempts to highlight mechanisms of affiliation and participation. It investigates also the role of mobile devices in supporting access and participation in this type of groups. As an exploratory study it is a first step towards



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

the comprehension of these mechanisms and their implications for learning and professional development mainly based on interviews to SNSs groups' managers. A wider survey involving also SNSs groups' members is currently undergoing.

*The transformational role of social mobile media in the context of the Nepalese medical education system*, Sebastian Linxen, Christoph Pimmer, School of Business, Institute for Information Systems (CH)

In this contribution the transformational potential of social mobile media in developing countries will be addressed from a socio-cultural perspective. Networking sites – like Facebook – that are often accessed by means of mobiles are highly popular in developing contexts. They can be regarded as a catalyst for mobile internet use in general. From a learning perspective they enable students and teachers to participate in social professional communities beyond local and even national boundaries. The technological artifacts do not only lead to new and emerging educational practices in informal learning contexts, they also affect the overall educational system. The on-going change has to be critically viewed with respect to media literacy, privacy as well as to ethical and legal issues. In the light of the achievement of the UN Development goals it's pedagogic implications, however, appear to be far more powerful than those of the numerous initiatives that distribute technology and knowledge - bottom up - in formal learning settings. The arguments will be underpinned with examples from the presenters' own research on the Nepalese medical education system. In addition, they will briefly discuss their findings with respect to current theoretical approaches.

*The Interweaved Fabrics of Reality: Physical, Social and Intentional*, Yishay Mor, Open University (UK)

Consider a well-trained football team, or a group of Tai-Chi players. We are fascinated by the way in which they act together; we derive aesthetic pleasure and excitement from observing them – and even more (if we can) from being a part of such an activity. The effect (and effectiveness) of such joint action is related to two characteristics. First, the participants are synchronized in space, social grouping and intent. Second, they are engaged in a patterned practice. The first observation points to what I see as a fundamental way in which we organize our experiences and construct reality. The second is probably unfamiliar to most readers. In this paper I will present these concepts, consider the relationship between them, and their relevance to the understanding of and designing for learning with social mobile technologies. Our actions are situated in contexts of physical location, social interaction and intentional state. We move within these spaces, and make sense of the world through them. Bruner (1991) observed that we create and share meanings by constructing narratives from our experiences. These narratives are composed of sequences of events – each occurring in a specific location, involving specific actors and noted for its relevance to particular intentions. The semantics of reality are defined in terms of rules governing our ability to act within these spaces. Consequently, we adopt regular forms of behaviour in response to recurring configurations of intentional, social and physical environments. Such forms have been described by Roepstorff et al (2010) as *patterned practices*.



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**

**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

The notion of patterned practice emerged in anthropological research as a response to a growing awareness to the problematic use of culture as a collective attribute. On one hand, research shows significant intra-cultural variance. On the other, the mobility and connectiveness of human society engender cross-cultural threads and trends and create new groups which do not fit existing labels. Instead, Roepstorff et al (2010) argue that “human group life orders itself into specific and semi-stable patterns of interaction, i.e. practices. Practices are shaped by material conditions, social dynamics and normative orders” (p. 1057) and these patterned practices should constitute a more useful axis of analysis. Individuals’ engagement in patterned practices shape their mind and body, and in return they reshape the environment – physical and social – in which they operate.

An awareness of patterned practices, with an acute sensitivity to the interweaving of the physical, social and intentional fabric in which these are situated, provides us a powerful tool for understanding, and consequently designing, the learning potential of experiences afforded by mobile and social technologies. Such technologies can amplify or fragment the cohesion of experiences across these dimensions: sitting at a café with a friend, I constantly check my twitter feed: I am participating in an established practice, clearly defined in location, social contract and joint intent – yet I am not fully present, part of me is engaged in other interactions, detached from the physical context. On the other hand, I participate in the twitter back-channel of a conference – thus simultaneously capitalizing on and contributing to the shared intents of the social group present at that location.

*Informal learning in ‘social mobile’ contexts examined in relation to formal, school-based mobile learning and current German media research, Ben Bachmair, Institute of Education, University of London, and University of Kassel (DE)*

My basic experience of social mobile contexts and their learning potential is a strong resistance by schools as formal learning institution. This paper considers the interrelationship of mobile / smart phones, the social web and institutionalized, formal school-based learning with a focus on notions of “widening contexts” and “conversational threads”. These categories stem from the LMLG flyer on “Parameters and focal points for planning and evaluation of mobile learning” (Bachmair, B., Pachler, N. and Cook, J. 2011) and the examples given are taken from recent British and German school projects on at-risk learners. In a second step I will discuss schools’ institutional resistance to social mobile contexts and their learning potential in the light of selected recent German research results on media with particular emphasis on use the condition of media convergence.

*Mobile Learning – potential and controversies embodied in a young scientific field and arising consequences for future research and practice with view to social, networked and (informal) learning, Judith Seipold, London Mobile Learning Group (UK)*





**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**  
**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

Mobile Learning is a relatively young discipline, which already has – in some European countries more than in others – a stable standing in both, the scientific discussion and fields of practice. However, even if the mobile learning field seems to be a booming area that generates lots of ideas and future scenarios on how teaching and learning could or should be realised by using mobile and convergent technologies: the reality is often not as innovative and progressive as enthusiasts and advocates of the discipline want people make believe. This applies not only to theoretical approaches but also – and especially – to the practice realised in formalised learning contexts such as school. An analysis of the process of the mobile learning discussion in the U.K. and the German speaking countries Germany, Austria and Switzerland gives evidence to this fact. This analysis which considers the scientific process of the mobile learning discussion, mobile learning practice and methods for the implementation of mobile learning practice in formalised contexts allows to draw conclusions which have relevance not only for the current practice of mobile learning, but that also gives hints on which aspects should be focused by future research and on ways how (informal aspects of) mobile learning should be implemented in formalised contexts without ignoring the learners' agency, cultural practices, expertise and knowledge.

The paper is structured in three parts: (1) the first part focuses on the structure of the scientific process of the British and German speaking mobile learning discussion by considering central papers, projects and definitions. It will point out contexts, practices as well as phases and development lines that are relevant for and arising from the scientific discussion on mobile learning; (2) the second part focuses on projects that are using mobile and convergent technologies in formalised learning context, i.e. school. The analysis of the use of mobile technologies in these projects, together with the results drawn from the structure of the scientific process, provide a basis for conclusions relevant for theoretical approaches to and the practical implementation of mobile learning, considering elements of a socio-cultural ecology of mobile learning (i.e. structures, agency and cultural practices of learners and learning; see Pachler et al. 2010); (3) the third part of this paper brings together the results drawn from the preceding sections with the aim to highlight areas that need to be developed in future projects and research, that should be adjusted in favour of the learners' agency, cultural practices, knowledge and expertises, and that can inform areas which are not reduced to learning with mobile technologies, but consider also general areas like didactic approaches to teaching and learning that are informed by a socio-cultural ecology.

This last part will rise questions concerning social, networked and informal learning, e.g. what could social and networked learning mean in formalised contexts, which aspects of informal learning could be used in school contexts, and which models and conceptual frameworks could be useful to frame such approaches on a theoretical and a practical level. These issues will be discussed by giving examples from mobile learning practice in schools. Also, it will be exemplified how informal and formal aspects of learning can be brought together for school learning, which role social and networked practices and the learners' agency have in this context, and what teachers should consider to moderate these often conflicting aspects.



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE**  
**Institute of Education, London, November 21th, 2011**

*Connecting formal and informal learning in Higher Education using a mobile multimedia microblogging environment*, Carmen Holotescu, Politechnica University of Timisoara, and Gabriela Grosseck, University of the West Timisoara (RO)

In recent years, the most daring player in the social media arena proved to be the microblogging technology, as popular platforms used worldwide in educational environments are Twitter, Edmodo, Yammer or Twiducate. While there is a whole literature about the role of microblogging to support teaching in learning in Academia, research also revealed a growing evidence that the use of microblogging based on mobile technologies can help integrate formal and informal learning in university settings.

In the context in which the new frontier of social media is marked out by the use of mobile devices anywhere, anytime, by anyone and anything, this paper aims at valorizing the mobility parameters of microblogging, in order to connect formal and informal learning in higher education contexts by using the example of a specific platform – cirip.eu.

Thus, the purpose of this paper is:

- a) to provide a general overview for using microblogs as social networks through mobile technologies;
- b) to describe mobile microblogging learning benefits, opportunities, limits and risks
- c) to present learning practices based on mobile multimedia microblogging both for formal and informal higher education contexts.

The paper is centered to integrate various aspects of connecting formal and informal learning for higher education based on the social mobile networking feature of microblogging technology at two levels: *technological and pedagogical* (e.g. create, localize and join mobile communities, access and use social media and Open Educational Resources, participate in polls and quizzes – asking questions, observing the other learners, create and manage mobile Personal Learning Environments/Networks etc.).

