Schools and Social Software Appropriation

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Main Goal

To discuss the role that **appropriation** has on **social software** adoption and use

Appropriation, defined

Appropriation is the use of cognitive and physical resources by individuals in their daily practices.

Mastering a tool: acquiring the skills needed to operate a specific technology.

Appropriation goes beyond that: includes the development of competence to use that tool in a **social context**.

Distinction between the user and the designer becomes blurred at the time of practical use of the object

The sole act of using it is already a modification of its design

Young people, culture and technology

Perceived power of the Internet
+
"Web 2.0" tools

Increasing number of people seeking to become
"prosumers"

(Producers + Consumers)

Example

Students using tools like wikis and blogs:

- chance to work independently, without being subject to any form of recognized authority.

The anachronism of the Classroom

People on traditional classroom settings

Resemble workers on a factory

Who suddenly realize they can make valid products with their own means of production

Not needing the factory's machinery

Dynamics of Tech Use by the Young

Early adopters of social software

Tech use is spontaneous

Not prompted by adults

Major features of tech appropriation

1- Sense of identity

2- Power

3- Fragmentation

Carroll, Howard, Vetere and Murphy (2001)

Appropriation...

attractors (convenience, utility, fashion)

repellents (cost, difficulty, spam)

Carroll, et al (2001)

Vygotsky:

Cultural Artifacts

Mediate relationship between human beings and objects on the environment

Vygotsky:

Technology

Shaped by social forces
Shapes the social world

The Individual

is A Socio-Culturally

Embedded Agent

The Individual is not...

A "processor" or a "system component"

Community

Mediates Human Activity

(Rules, and Division of Labor)

<<Insert Activity Theory Diagram>>

School

Cannot be a restrictive schooling environment

Example 1:

School required to participate in the struggle against info-exclusion

Example 2:

Democratic societies require formal and informal education of citizens

Portuguese Universities

(Small) number of teachers exploring ICT tools, specially Moodle

Web 2.0 is still in a phase of "early adoption"

Web 2.0 as Participatory Media

1. Many-to-many relationship

2. Power

3. Enhanced coordination of activities

Education and Web 2.0

Making "digital natives" to realize that

Publishing online

is intrinsically related to

The power of the individual

(In a democratic society)

Blurring of Distinction

Between "high" and "low" forms of culture

Between work, leisure, rest and learning

Beyond Moodle (and other LMS's)

Collaborative nature of learning with LMS's

Has been emphasized many times,

but...

Beyond Moodle (and other LMS's)

Traditional LMS's

Lack the cues that are important to enable

activity to shape learning

through social interaction

Web 2.0 and Informal Learning

Web 2.0 is pervasive

(even if unauthorized)

Web 2.0 and Informal Learning

Vast majority of Web 2.0 services

Not designed within an educational framework

Use is outside Institutional control

Web 2.0 is challenging

Should we radically change:

a) Learning Spaces

(The walled classroom & LMS vs the Internet)

b) Learning Structures

(Is any kind of structure really needed?
Again LMS vs Web 2.0)

Final Remarks - 1

Technology appropriation

is a dynamic process

Complex psychological and socio-cultural factors

Preclude normative models

Final Remarks - 2

People are not just "end users"

They are "end designers"

(This is what appropriation is about)

Final Remarks - 3

The ultimate word on how a technology is used

is given by the individual

Final Remarks - 4

Social software can play crucial role

in transforming

old information ecologies

and in preparing new ones