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Editorial

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Editorial

Thomas Apperly & Christopher S. Walsh
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The second issue of *Digital Culture & Education* introduces a dynamic collection of articles that demonstrate the diverse interests and common concerns of media and education scholars, researchers and practitioners working with, and in digital media. The second issue covers diverse topics: a model of ICT innovations in education, teaching geometric design principles, videogames and otaku (おたく/オタク) culture in Japan, and a critique of a broad generational demographic analysis of Internet use.

Initially, Castulus Kolo and Andreas Breiter set the scene by proposing a model that accounts for both the cultural embeddedness of institutional education, and the dynamics of technological and social change in ‘An integrative model for the dynamics of ICT-based innovations in education’. The model’s three levels: individual, institutional, and macro, direct attention towards how educational innovation takes place in a context that is defined by the interplay of a large number of actors. The authors propose a concept of an “educational innovation system” to analyse differences in the diffusion of ICT-based innovations across countries to better understand educational policies and their impact on classroom practice.

Loe Fejls and Christopher Bartneck propose a new method of teaching the principles of geometry to design students. Their article, ‘Teaching geometrical principles to design students’ examines the challenge of teaching design students the history of abstract theory that informs their digital tools (in this case Mathematica software). The authors’ outline a classroom project on tessellations for which they developed historic materials which traced the development of tessellations informing principles through Euclidian, analytical, and transformational geometry. Moving beyond digital representation of tessellation design students cut their tessellations in Perspex, thereby moving the abstract concepts of math into the real world so that they can experience them directly. The authors argue that such a project supports the students understanding of design software by allowing them to explore and understand the mathematical principles behind them.

Fabian Schäfer’s article, “‘Ludic philosophy’: Subjectivity, choice, and virtual death in digital media’, approaches videogames as philosophical objects, arguing in favour of what he calls ‘ludic philosophy’ as a tool to aid the pedagogical integration of videogames into education by engaging game-players on their own terms. Delving into the recently translated works of Hiroki Azuma (2009), Schäfer argues that videogame players engage in a ‘flat’ mode of subjectivity that approaches knowledge production as a database.

In ‘Not so “techno-savvy”: Challenging the stereotypical images of the “Net generation”’, Shelia Zimic highlights a peculiar problem that emerges in studies of youths’ media use, that of stereotyping youth as ‘techno-savvy’. However useful the familiar adages of ‘net generation’ and ‘digital natives’ are for marking the different experiences of youth growing up in highly mediated environment, such terms also facilitate a very general understanding of youths experiences with digital media. Zimic argues that it is necessary for scholars to explore the differences with these categories as much as their distinctiveness from previous generations.

The articles, however diverse, share a common theme: the desire to approach the challenges of educating the current generation of students on their own terms. Each of the articles takes a different approach to complicating the simple models, and downright ridiculous generational politics that so often accompanies discussions of this important task. Kolo and Breiter present a flexible and useful model that accounts for cultural and institutional difference that avoids the procrustean logic of purely technological solutions to ICT-based innovation in education. Fejis and Bartneck take a step back from the digital tools of contemporary design practice and engage their students in classroom activities that reveal the principles behind those tools and help their students understand a fuller understanding of their craft in the process. Schäfer looks towards the Otaku in order to obtain a more nuanced understanding the learning and knowledges that make up contemporary youth digital culture. While Zimic's article challenges the utility of mapping generalizations about media use and competency over entire generations.

This issue also contains two reviews. The review of Rita Raley's *Tactical Media* (2008), by Tanner Higgins provides a useful introduction to the first book-length treatment of the area of new media arts that deals specifically with how artists use digital media to make political interventions. Higgins is quick to point out that the book is an excellent introduction to the topic, and is ripe with recent and relevant examples of artists and art projects. Gurmit Singh also provides a thorough review of the International Association for the Development of the Information Society (IADIS) e-learning conference. His review demonstrates how the field of e-learning continues to thrive in its theorising potential, but still demands notable evidence demonstrating how technology, curriculum, management, delivery and research issues can successfully leverage e-learning to deliver meaningful educational outcomes. The cover art was supplied by Chris Haughton an Irish illustrator living in London who illustrates regularly for *The Guardian* and *The Independent* and other publications.

The start of the new decade also heralds a new volume of *Digital Culture & Education*. Three issues are planned for 2010. The call for papers for the first issue of volume two has been circulated, and is available for download in this issue. Guest edited by Dana Wilber, the special issue 'Beyond "New" Literacies', aims to draw together scholarship which examines how approaches to new media literacies may be expanded and strengthened through interdisciplinary approaches, particularly by drawing on methodologies and theories more traditionally associated with other disciplines. Two other special issues are planned for 2010, although *Digital Culture & Education* will continue to accept general submissions that are appropriate to the aims and scope of the journal. The two themes will be videogame cultures, and digital culture and health. Official calls for papers will be circulated later in the year.

References

- Azuma, H. (2001). *Dōbutsuka suru posutomodan: Otaku kara mita Nihon shakai*. Tōkyō: Kōdansha.
- Raley, R. (2009). *Tactical Media*. Minneapolis: U. Minnesota Press.