

CoSN Compendium 2010

VOLUME 8 : ISSUE 2

Web 2.0 as a Force for School Transformation: A Tale of Six Districts

by James Bosco, Judy Salpeter and Ariadna Mahon-Santos

According to media scholar Henry Jenkins, “Participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate content in powerful new ways.” So it is that blogs, Wikipedia, YouTube, social networks, and online collaboration have displaced the primacy of mass media and credentialed authorities. The sharp distinction between those who produce the culture and those who are consumers of it has been substantially eroded.

In this monograph, one of four that make up the 2010 CoSN Compendium, we look at six school districts that have made significant strides at adopting a participatory culture, with help from Web 2.0 tools and a careful reexamination of district policies and practices. They are:

- **Birdville Independent School District in Texas**, where students and teachers shape their own learning with help from tools such as Facebook, YouTube, blogs and cell phones.

How are forward-thinking districts tapping into the power of digital media to transform teaching, learning and communication for all members of the school community?

- **Connecticut’s New Canaan Public Schools**, where the use of social networking and other Web 2.0 tools has enabled a collaborative culture and educated students in the responsible, ethical, safe and legal uses of technology.
- **Westwood Cyber High School in Michigan**, where students who were once at risk of dropping out are now researchers in an online, collaborative environment that makes extensive use of Web 2.0 and social networking.
- **Forsyth County Schools in Georgia**, where 21st century technology, job-like teams, collaborative work on the creation of a digital learning object repository, and a variety of other support systems enable effective professional learning experiences for the district’s teachers.
- **Barrington 220 in Illinois**, where e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, and a Web site featuring podcasts and other student-created content keep parents and community members up to date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- **Texas' White Oak Independent School District**, where community members stay in touch with school through Twitter and Facebook, students publish podcasts and blogs, cell phones are welcome in the classroom, and district administrators avoid a "lockdown mentality." ■

THE COMPLETE MONOGRAPH CONTAINS:

- Profiles of all six districts.
- A librarian's perspective on the role school libraries and media centers play in the thoughtful adoption of Web 2.0 technologies.
- An overview of some of the Web 2.0 tools in use in the six districts profiled.
- Information about the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation-funded grant project focusing on schools and participatory culture.
- Resources for learning more.

This publication is one of four monographs that make up the **2010 CoSN Compendium**, a collection of resources for members of the Consortium for School Networking (www.cosn.org), a national non-profit organization that promotes the use of information technologies in K-12 education to improve learning.

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Thank you also to the following media sponsors for their support: C. Blohm & Associates, Inc., CDW-G, Center for Digital Education, District Administration, Education Week, eSchoolMedia, Edutopia, JDL Horizons, Market Data Retrieval, Marketing Projects, Inc., Scholastic Administr@tor, Tech & Learning, T.H.E. Journal, and the Winter Group.

