Chapter 10: Digital $%#@ smarts a lot! An autoethnographic account of academic work

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Abstract

Digital technologies and eLearning afford many rewards and pleasures including enabling academic work to be smarter rather than harder. This chapter is an autoethnographic (Ellis, 1999) account of academic work. Specifically, as an exploratory study, I investigate my relationship with the digital world over two years, with an emphasis on my own digital literacies (Bawden, 2001, 2008; Gilster, 1997; Martin, 2006) and pedagogies. Initially I drew on a year of field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) including emails, screen shots, personal journal notes, video, and electronic documents. I noticed themes such as displeasure, pain, frustration, and anger occurring in relation to my digital world. Identifying an absence of narratives in the literature about academic work in relation to digital experiences, I took more notice of the negative feelings in the second year of this project and created narratives that represented my experiences. These narratives, what I term digital bytes, are by no means universal but provide some insight into available subject positions and pedagogies to learn an academic digital habitus. I explore smarting as a significant outcome in academic work and embodiment of the digital. Smarting, in a negative sense, is not a useful outcome for university business or for educational change that is positive, proactive, sustainable, or even intellectually, digitally, or pedagogically smart. If intellectual work, in partnership with technology, is to remain central to universities, we need to be cognisant of how academics learn an academic self, our pedagogical work in teaching and research, and the professional and public pedagogy of the institution in relation to technology. I discuss implications for learning by those doing academic work and for the institutional employers attempting to facilitate engagement with the digital world.

Keywords: eLearning, digital technology, pedagogy, self, autoethnography, academic work
Opening scene

Figure 1: [http://youtu.be/Zr1s_B0zqX0](http://youtu.be/Zr1s_B0zqX0)

The sound of a solo pluck of a stringed instrument followed by a deep voice announcing “this is it” as the camera slides, slow motion, around the face of a smiling African American woman in her own world of music, cut off from the train she is riding by her white ear buds. Next, another pluck as a crescending monotone fills the soundscape, the camera cuts to a silent classroom of Asian young people totally engaged with fingers scrolling across the surface of modern day slates on their last century furniture in last century configurations. “This is what matters,” the calm omnipotent voice announces, keeping us in suspense as to what “it” is. The young boys in the classroom raise their arms enthusiastically, presumably in response to a question from the teacher, who is absent from the scene. “The experience of a product,” the voice goes on with another pluck of the string. Now a dimly lit young child nests in her/his adult’s lap and headless body, both focused with ET-like digits on the lit screen of a tablet that lights their faces in a muted glow. “How will it make someone feel” is answered with surprise from the young person before fade to black and open to a male and female
embracing below an umbrella in the moment before a kiss, her arm fully extended sideways, her hand grasping a phone as though set for ‘the’ shot, the photo of the moment. “Will it make life better?” the voice questions as the pair smile for a ‘selfie’. We move through other social scenes: a restaurant steaming with food smells, “does it deserve to exist?”; “we spend a lot of time on a few great things until every idea we touch”—from a stage at a rock concert; “enhances each life it touches”—at a family gathering exhilarated by reliving memories; “you may rarely look at it”—feet in a bedroom covered with pictures on the wall; “but you’ll always feel it”—as the camera cuts to the owner of the feet, joyously interacting with a touch screen as she rolls around her bed. “This is our signature and it means everything” as the hint of the Apple icon on the phone shows through her grasp and the picture fades to a simple tag line: “Designed by Apple in California”.

This one-minute ad, “Our signature”, leaps to the heart of this chapter. To me, the advertisement captures the pervasiveness and importance of the digital world—its importance in relation to people. In a recent advertisement for a Dean’s position at our university it was stated:

Our motto is “Ko Te Tangata”, or “For The People”, and we put people at the centre of everything we do as we focus on bringing excellence, distinctiveness and international connectedness to our region. (Dean job advertisement, accessed January 28, 2014)

Like both advertisements, I place people, doing academic work, as central to this chapter. I work from an assumption that those doing academic work are central to the functioning of universities, academic work being the object investigation in this paper. Discovering or creating new knowledge, learning and then teaching, are part of this work. Increasingly, too, digital technology, new communication technologies, eLearning and digital literacies are part of our academic work, yet many of my experiences are far from the sweet, slow-motion, joyous events captured in the opening video. Although I am positioned as an early adopter of technology with a positive yet critical disposition towards the digital, the experiences and learning that informs this chapter illustrate some of the blind spots associated with research about the digital world—the displeasure, suffering and pain. These are my meaning of ‘smarting’ or ‘smarts’. Using what I playfully call digital bytes, I call attention to the smarting pedagogies that constitute (my) academic work in the lived space between policy, advertisements and people. This is with a motive to reconstruct academic work as positive, generative and intellectual; to explicate the role of technology in such work; and draw attention to the institutional disconnect from the changing academic field.

New communication technologies provide possibilities for transformative pedagogies (Owen, Grant, Sayers, & Facer, 2006; Turvey, 2009), as well as changing pedagogical paradigms that address power relations:

30 I use “digital” to include information and technology communication and literacies
31 I also recognise those questioning the demise of intellectual work within universities and the work that digital technologies can do to loosen the relationship of universities and intellectual work by enabling new intellectual spaces to form beyond the university field, but these discussions are beyond the scope of this chapter.
32 While I will unpack these adjectives I acknowledge they are first world problems but with potentially significant effects for academic work and relationships across advantaged and disadvantaged worlds.
In all learning these are the central issues: Whose agenda is at work, with what power, with what principles of recognition of learning. How is that agenda presented and is it accepted or recognised by those who are potential learners? As “learning” escapes the frames of institutional pedagogy—a matter in which the e-technologies are deeply implicated—these are questions of increasing importance. (Kress & Pachler, 2007, p. 19)

Kress and Pachler go on to argue that different dispositions towards learning involving new applications, networks, devices and learners in relation to knowledge or information may bring about a new “habitus of learning” (2007, p. 27). eLearning is thought to promote intellectual thinking and new behavioural patterns from a change in thinking dispositions (Bouhnik & Carmi, 2012). While Turvey (2009) considers such a change in relationship to knowledge by asking “how has the formal education establishment responded thus far to the shifting technological landscape?” (p. 784), Georgina and Hosford (2009) also consider the implications for higher education and its workers:

The move toward integration of technology is obvious and most apparent through the creation of blended courses. The new goal in higher education now seems to be the creation of a university-wide professoriate in both information literacy and technology literacy. Therefore, the manner in which technology training is conducted may be vastly important. Technology alone does nothing to enhance pedagogy; successful integration is all about the ways in which technology tools are used and integrated into teaching. This, of course, means that faculty must be trained in the use of the tools not just given access to the tools, integrating new software as part of an interactive teaching and learning strategy. (p. 695)

Clearly, the digital has significant implications for contemporary academic work.

The university within which I do academic work has recently considered the implications of technology on core ‘business’ and academic work. The release of the position paper Future Directions for Teaching and Learning at the University of Waikato (2013) considers implications of technology, eLearning, and digital literacy within an environment of competition, sustainability, and within the field of education. In this current dynamic, neoliberal climate, to ensure that intellectual work, in partnership with technology, is to remain central to universities, we need to be cognisant of how academics learn an academic self, our pedagogical work in teaching and research, and the professional and public pedagogy of the institution in relation to technology. After describing the methodology behind this chapter, I present several digital bytes. These are narratives that capture some of my lived pedagogies in relation to digital technology. These provide substance for further exploration in how we learn our academic self in academic work, how we engage with the pedagogies of technologies, the role and nature of digital technology in work that is both sustainable and generative, and the role of the institution in effectively instituting and supporting digital technologies.

What sits behind digital bytes as narratives of smarting?

The theoretical assemblage of Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (e.g., 2000) Norman Denzin (2000, 2010) and Soyini Madison (2012) informs my broad methodological orientation towards scholarship
in the form of autoethnography (Reed-Danahay 1997). This methodology uses the researcher/writer’s perspective, foregrounding experience and meaning making from the subject position—in this case, ‘academic’. It is a way of depicting “people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles” (Bochner & Ellis, 2006, p. 111).

As part of an ongoing autoethnographic project, I have kept a digital journal of my academic work experiences for some years. This journal constitutes what Clandinin and Connelly call “field texts” (2000) or “data”, and “interim research texts” or early forms of analysis. With further refinement and alignment, these two text sources become “research texts” in the form of reports, or in this case, a chapter.

The field and interim research texts presented here were created during a two-year timespace around the trigger for this chapter, an invitation to participate in a book-writing project about Digital Smarts. On hearing the title I immediately thought of the pain I had experienced in relation to digital technology in the past year. I had been participating in an eLearning group at the university as one of the several professional development opportunities I participated in to augment my digital literacy and to keep abreast of eLearning possibilities that may enhance student learning in my classes. After the invitation by Diane and Noeline, I reflected on my journal for the past year of academic work in relation to my digital experiences. This journal included general descriptions, screenshots, video capture, documents, and emails of the work with which I was engaged as part of my job, sometimes on a daily basis and in rich detail, sometimes as minimal entries across a week. It also included entries that captured bodily responses to practices, ones that seemed intuitively important to note; there was something about incidents, pedagogical events or my reaction to them that told me something was being learned, like an ‘aha’ moment, or that something was out of alignment with my sense of the world. Elizabeth Ellsworth asks, “What might become possible and thinkable if we were to take pedagogy to be sensational?” (2005, p. 24). Inspired by her work and that of Sarah Pink’s Doing Sensory Ethnography (2009), I was paying attention to the bodily sensations that were modulating and mediating my digital learning.

Identifying and then coding past journal entries as ‘smarting’ sensitized me to some of the emotions, affects and material effects of my work as related to my digital world. I depart from others’ use of smart/s in this publication by using it as an analytic verb and noun, as “feeling upset and annoyed” and a “sharp stinging pain” (see Image 2). Smarting incorporated negative affect and emotion including frustration, pain, displeasure and a sense of loss of competence. It could include a liminal space where ‘self’ as an entity becomes lost, felt as ‘not’, or as abject—all as negative experiences of self. Unlike Smuts’ (2010) argument that there is desirable nonpleasure, the smarting I refer to in this paper is undesirable nonpleasure, specifically as it demotivated learning. While the negative affect and sensory experiences may result from, or act as a marker of, the experience of learning, it was nonetheless undesirable in its intensity and often within particularly high stakes timespaces.
Journal entries also took the form of reflections on such pedagogical events. These were early interim research texts. After identifying instances of smarting, I journaled on questions such as “What was going on? Who was involved and being affected? How did it feel? What senses were triggered? What was the result? What did I learn?” These helped me to be more aware of each event in the year that followed the writing invitation, and to journal with detail and attention to the senses. Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity (1990a, 1990b) becomes an analytical utensil to excavate my practices of sensing, and making sense of, the embodied subject positions that I take up or that are made available to me (Grosz, 1994, 1995). I was looking for what positions were made available to me in relation to technology, for example as ‘digitally literate’, ‘learner’, ‘early adopter’ or ‘failure’, 
both in terms of how I position myself but also how I am being positioned within the culture/field/social spaces of academic work.

Much like Bourdieu situates the habitus in a dialogue of constituting and being constituted by social fields, others capture the embeddedness of self within society, micro interacting with macro, as forms of analysis (e.g., James Gee and D/discourse analysis, 2007). This relationship is one I attempt to capture using autoethnography, which locates self within extended group contextualisation of academic work. I employ a combination of autobiography and reflexive ethnography, describing my experiences and critiquing such experiences using reflection, conceptual frameworks and contextual clues. Tami Spry refers to this orientation of scholarship as “performative-I” (2006) that illuminates critical reflexivity. While debates about the value and applicability of autoethnography continue (e.g., see Terry, 2006, p. 211), there is a solid base of scholarship supporting methodologies framed as autoethnography, from Bourdieu’s expectation of researcher reflexivity (1990a) that includes critical reflexivity (Madison, 2012) while being mindful of the moral implications of such work. As Ellsworth notes, “We have been positioned to knowing in a way that experience is undervalued, suspicion swirls because experience is ‘under-theorised’ and easily ‘contaminated’ by naïve subjectivity” (2005, p. 2) so my critical scholarship seeks to legitimate such work as an entrée to future practices that are more socially just within the field of academic work. From a knowing position doing academic work, I do autoethnography and expose some of the difficulties that seem to otherwise go unnoticed.

Following Ellis (1999, 2004), my autoethnographic narratives, what I call digital bytes, draw on “the conventions of literary writing and expression” featuring “concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterization, and plot” (2004, p. xix). The bytes are based on collated journal entries that cluster around pedagogical moments situated in my work. They represent a stitching together of fragmented and complex instances of learning the self, learning one’s relationship with technology, learning one’s relationship to others, and therefore the institution. As with previous work (lisahunter, 2013, 2014), they are my attempt at making sense of the smarting I was experiencing as academic work.

Smarting bytes

Digital Byte 1: Spinning wheel of death

I see you, for the umpteenth time today. In my work den, filling in the fourth electronic form in Word sent through email and requiring information from the internet. With a half crazed, light, and flighty voice, your presence triggers my song “Spinning wheel very pretty and the spinning is so sweet but the fruit of the poor spinny is impossible to eat”. I jump out of my office chair and catch my tights on the broken base. I think “Fuck you”, while you continue spinning to the song I sing. I become a mass of flailing arms and legs, akin to what one might see at a nightclub, without even noticing whether the office door was open or not. My frustration soars in my spinning body as my movement becomes more refined in the little space I have. My whirling dervish motions make me giddy and time seems to have stopped still. I glance back at the screen on one rotation, the wheel continues and my song continues. Anyone who knows Peter, Paul and Mary’s song “lemon tree” will sing along with me. But my whirling dervish skills only last for several seconds more as anger electrifies and zaps through my every cell and synapse, from tan t’ien to eyes,
fingers feet and my gaze is stolen by the screen and the color wheel spinning, spinnnnnnnnning, spinnnnnnnnning. “Look at me, look at me, look at me,” I yell more forcefully than Kath would, looking accusingly at the wheel and being its voice as it gloats at my helplessness, forcing me to be patient for the millionth time today, “I’m not a lemon, I’m a spinning wheel of DEATH,” it ventriloquizes…my voice moves into a slow, foreboding guttural tone and I feel the tension in every muscle of my flesh as I throw myself back into my chair, contract my limbs and glare at my screen, the pulse in my temples pounding at my bulging eyes. “Spin my pretty, spin” a Gollumish performance as a trance-like state overrides me and I merge into the machine, unable to move the wheel along from the outside, my shaking of the mouse and test taps on the keyboard bringing nothing, “NOTHING,” I spit through clenched teeth facing my enemy with only centimetres between us. “I may as well poke a cadaver,” I growl.

I become it, in a flash; I contemplate throwing my laptop out the window. We sail in slow motion, floating, almost suspended, as I too feel I am part of its white casing, circuit boards and “intelligence”. Then, just like on the films that play with time, laptop speed up and crash on the ground below into millions of fragments, again slowing to a second per minute to see every fracture, every crack expanding and project upwards and outwards like a flower opening or a balloon of water breaking. The moment seems to last forever. I become space and I sigh peacefully, released. The wheel stops and my trance is broken. I re-emerge, the hardware reality where the wheel, now replaced by a cursor, beckons me to attend to the task I have waited precious minutes to progress. This is not the first time the wheel of death has visited me today. The technical experts suggest the visitations are due to “Word being flaky”, “you’ve got too much open”, and “we’ve had some problems with the server today”. My despondency washes through the room as I have no solace knowing these limitations are imposed and inherent in work that must be done yesterday, and the wheel of death is likely to visit again very soon as it has so many times before on my five year old laptop extension of my academic self.

Newsflash. A recent study reports two instances of desk rage per day. My experience isn’t isolated according to this story:

![Figure 3: Desk rage](image-url)
But does it need to be this way? Aren’t thinking and ideas central to my work? Not a desk computer? Another study by Georgina and Olsen (2008) announces general recommendations for an inclusive technology-literate faculty. I wonder, am I technology literate? How do I deal with a flaky Word when colleagues only send me a Word file for me to work from? “Bring it on,” I sigh as I read the list, filling out my imaginary responses (Figure 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X. Is an add on</td>
<td>If you seek them out but they are few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplemental pay increases for faculty who are the most involved with the evolution of the integration of technology into pedagogy</td>
<td>Nope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>departmental-level surveys for determining individual faculty technology needs</td>
<td>Nope, tried to instigate one - low interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow-through procedures that are clearly stated with precise goals and objectives for the university, college, department, and faculty</td>
<td>Can’t think of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decentralization of technology</td>
<td>Mixed, and confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access to real-time IT support staff</td>
<td>Yes but not ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT staff with pedagogy &amp; instructional design experience</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty representation into IT infrastructure conversations</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty input into software choices</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realistic and practical pedagogy-based goals that are representative of the institutional and departmental mission statements</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutional technology assessment techniques</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>departmental/local faculty-run technology forums</td>
<td>No although a few of us manage through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college-level faculty-run technology forums</td>
<td>One that I can’t get to as I’m teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university-level faculty-run technology forums</td>
<td>Yes, ah yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and university or campus-wide campus for faculty technology training staffed with college, and departmental faculty representatives comprising technology-literate faculty</td>
<td>Yes and no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: General recommendations for an inclusive technology-literate faculty (Georgina & Olsen, 2008)
“What can I DO?” I say with my head in my hands. “Back to the slog” comes the echo.…

Digital Byte 2: “Learning” systems, “learning systems” and learning “systems”

Knock knock…the email reminders constantly tap at my mind, professional development, workshops, eLearning, pedagogies, transformative pedagogies of digital systems, come one come all, but my colleagues opt not for the uni-based system of Moodle but a faculty-based one…what’s best for the students? Which students?

**elearning Workshops**
- Discussion Boards - the basics | 1st March
- Online Assessment | 6th April
- Discussion Boards - beyond the basics | 5th May
- Lecture Capture and beyond | 1st June
- Using Quizzes for Learning | 5th July
- Blogs for Learning | 3rd August
- Turnitin & Plagiarism | 1st September
- Social Bookmarking | 4th October
- Online collaboration | 1st November
- New tools for a new year | 1st December

**Moodle Workshops**
- Moodle One: Getting started with resources
  - > 1st February, 9th June, 2nd November
- Moodle Two: Paper Settings & Communication
  - > 8th February, 16th June, 9th November
- Moodle Three: Assessment tools in Moodle
  - > 15th February, 23rd June, 16th November
- Moodle Four: Groups and Groupings
  - > 22nd February, 30th June, 23rd November
- Moodle Digest One
  - > 19th April, 24th August
- Moodle Digest Two
  - > 20th April, 25th August

**Figure 5: Poster**

This poster (Figure 5) opens millions of drawers in my memories, hiding info in nooks and crannies that I try to make sense of. The excitement of exploring some or many of these is slashed with the taser-like experience delivered daily by deadlines and unknown policies dictating procedures that knock unannounced at my door. I’m afraid to open the door when the din outside is increasing. If only I knew if they were friendly. “Google drive”, “Moodle”, “Panopto”, “Vlogs”, “eportfolios”, calls the salesperson come technical expert through the megaphone. “Step right up folks. Improve your students’ learning, teach them to teach using these tools, enhance your own pedagogies, step right up.” The announcements keep coming through emails, the posters around the corridors, our staff Home Page and the university website…

Too late to use for this semester… too long before practically using it next time…learning lag, neural pathways thin or break. Do I bother? No one else in my corridor is keen. Let’s try a couple…
Anticipation, excitement, I can taste my passion for learning as again I read the many courses and workshops available to advance my digital literacy and eLearning. An overwhelming urge to tick all the boxes in the multitude of emails advertising “opportunities” holds my hand still as my calendar vibrates its coded work demands and small spaces available. Behind those spaces are the lists of lists of commitments: preparing for teaching, ethics application, project design, funding sourcing, write that chapter, revise that paper, your report is due, answer this email, fill in that form, PhD supervision, your master’s student needs extra help, can you do a guest lecture for us?, Bourdieu Hui funding, congratulations you’ve been awarded a summer scholarship so start the work, editors’ advice on your chapter has arrived, book the car for school visits, reminder—eLearning brown bag lunch, article is awaiting review, marks are due, external evaluation of your course requires documentation, graduation coming up, think about the conference, get your abstract in, accommodation needs booking, your pcard …aaaaah, I’m drowning in ‘stuff’ and the familiar professional development emails tug me back in one direction.

“Information, so much information. Can I read faster perhaps?” I ask myself, chest tightening, with the email window open at the Moodle courses I want to attend. “How many emails can one get in a day…and about the same thing?” I wonder and make a note to find time to count them one day. I’m exhausted. Working with the computer all day is not healthy ‘they’ say but I’ve left my emails for a day and just can’t catch up. Email triage drains my blood and my hands are cold despite tapping furiously on the keyboard. The freshly cut grass outside wafts through my window and the soles of my feet imagine the cool relief the grass would provide. “Get out there and get some fresh air,” I
negotiate, but my body stays tucked into the folds of my office chair as the email list and the work behind the list beckons my eyes. “To Moodle or to not Moodle,” I ponder. I can feel the tightness in my gut and I wriggle my shoulders to pull them down with a deep in and out breath. Perhaps I could squeeze in a few Moodle sessions. I HAVE to start somewhere, I WANT to do it…Can words take over my life? Decisions? Time? Priorities?

**Figure 7: Words**

*Digital byte 3: Online exams? We don’t do that!*  

Her voice is urgent at the other end of the phone. “You need to organise rooms for your exam,” she states. “I thought that is what the central exam system does?” I reply rather mystified. “No, in this case, because you want to use computers you have to ensure there are spaces available.” I feel like I’m missing something here. I was assured at the outset that the online exam was tenable; in fact, I was encouraged to do it by the technical staff. Without the exam date being set, how can I book computer rooms? This doesn’t feel right. Another call, “You need to ensure you have technical support in the rooms.” Now I’m getting really worried. “We don’t do that,” my technical support colleague informs me! “An online exam hasn’t been done in this faculty before,” he continues. “You could change the exam to a test and run it yourself,” the examination manager says. “We can talk about this as a possibility next year,” he says. But my course outline is the “legal contract,” my line manager reminds me. “You will need to get every student’s signature to say you are changing from an exam to a test,” says the faculty administrator.

The next few weeks of workshops and lectures and Moodle posts discuss with students changing from an invigilated exam to a test, asking if it would be a problem for anyone and if not, gather their signatures to acknowledge the change. The buggers don’t all come to class or “talk” on Moodle though, do they? “You REALLY need to get those signatures quickly,” a cacophony of voices echo. I telephone 22 outstanding signatures, leave messages, email personally. A week later, still six to go. An underlying tension sits with me daily. It’s too late to go back. Stuff them, if they don’t come to class or communicate with me, why should they have the right to stuff it up for everyone else? We can’t keep changing the outcome but the ‘rule’ says we must stick to what is advertised without ALL those signatures. My blood boils knowing that what IS advertised is also
impossible DESPITE me getting confirmation prior to hitting that upload button. I’m trapped. These systems are cruel. I taste blood inside my mouth and realise I have been chewing my mouth raw.

*Digital Byte 4: Mixed messages and the buck stops with YOU (me)!*

Multi dialogues

Broken fragments

Across time

Like my self

Threads tangled between time and people

Almost organic emails producing faster than the synaptic pathways

Developing in my flesh as learning

The core of university work

How do I make sense of it?

Trying new things Planning with technical and eLearning staff

Not all is foreseen advice varies

Who is there to help when it is needed? Who is there to help the students? Who is there to help me help them? How will it all play out? Am I playing with fire?

I email ‘technical support’

Technical support responds

We to and fro

A process of inquiry a process of logging jobs?

Amongst everything else?

The giant leap of ‘going Moodle’
Figure 8: Conversation 1

Kia ora [to support person].
Who’s the best person to talk to for getting Moodle set up for a course?

The Centre for eLearning team manage Moodle, so they are who to contact. Their support person is [name] at extension 1234. She will probably get you to log a job with ITS (ext 4000 or help@waikato.ac.nz). Also try people in your faculty tech support.

Hi [name], I think we’ve pretty much got the workgroups sorted for [course name] but there might be a few changes to deal with as they happen. Please can you set them up so students can upload ejournals from 11am Monday July 25? Can you please let me know what I need to say to them to ensure they know what to do? We’re trying to do achieve is ejournals made from text and images and maybe youtube. But if that’s too hard, they could just put the

will you have time to check my quiz test today? I want to make sure it’s ok before I make it live.

Sure, will do

I’ve done the info part and loaded the questions into the question bank, but been getting on...

Ok, I’ll try to have a look

would you have some time to help me with Moodle again on Monday (not 1-3) or Tues am? I’ve done some things but they need checking and maybe tweaking. Also, can you or someone else come to my first lecture on Tues afternoon at 4pm to supervise my first panopto? It’s in...


To: secretaries@waikato.ac.nz
Subject: [Secretaries] Moodle Teachers - please release your papers :)

Secretaries - please circulate to teaching staff

A Semester 2011 Moodle Reminders (copy of the post from the Moodle Users Course)

Moodle Queries: ALL Moodle queries should be directed via the ITS Helpdesk in the first instance to be logged (this is required for reporting and tracking of queries). Helpdesk staff will assist immediately where they can and send any requests they cannot assist with to the CENTRE FOR ELEARNING Team for action. Teaching access to papers: You should have already requested and received access to your A Semester papers. If you still cannot see these when you log into Moodle please email the ITS Helpdesk (help@waikato.ac.nz) to request teacher access to it/them. Include the full paper occurrence in your request, e.g. ABC123-11A (PAK). If you wish to request a meta-paper (two occurrences merged and taught together) please request this via the ITS Helpdesk before you begin development of individual papers. NOTE: Due to the busy time of the semester please expect a delay in these requests being actioned.

Importing last year/semesters Moodle content: Remember that importing (copying) content from a previous paper into this one is your responsibility. Instructions are available within the Moodle Users Course. This is a relatively easy process, follow the instructions and view a video tutorial in this Moodle Users paper on the eLearn Moodle site. Please Note: We have had a few queries relating this process not working correctly. IT is VERY IMPORTANT to set the number of sections BEFORE starting the import process to ensure the resources/activities are copied into the correct sections. If you do not do this everything will appear in the very top section!

Student access to papers: When you are ready for students to access your Moodle paper remember to change the 'Availability' setting (via the Adminstration - Settings screen). Students cannot see hidden papers, which are displayed with a Grey link on the front Moodle page. All students who are currently on 'ENR' (fully enrolled and have returned their Offer of Place) will receive automatic access - if there is a student missing please ask them to check their enrolment before contacting the ITS Helpdesk.

-----Original Message-----
From: lisahunter [mailto:lisahunter@waikato.ac.nz]
Sent: Friday, 22 July 2011 9:34 a.m.
To: University of Waikato
Subject: URGENT please create moodle occurrence for [Course A]

dear helper,
I am new to staff and to this process.
please could you help me i need a moodle occurrence to be created for [Course A]. it's rather urgent as it is required to fix some other problems and this has been identified as the best solution yesterday x said to request this and i need to have it available and in use for monday if not sooner. are you able to help please? many thanks in advance slange :-)

Hello Lisa,

Your incident 63286 has now been fixed, unless we hear from you, your Incident 63286 will be resolved. Your incident will then be closed after 5 business days.

Resolution Details:
A required step in the process, making sure that the paper is correctly configured in the Jede system was missed which has caused the delay in it appearing in Moodle for you. Tonight once the update script runs, the paper will be created in Moodle and you will be added as the teacher. So from tomorrow you will be able to add resources to the paper for your class.

Kind regards

ITS Service Desk

Should you have any questions or comments regarding this issue please do not hesitate to contact the ITS Service desk on Ext. 4008 (636 4008 from an external phone) or email us at help@waikato.ac.nz, quoting the incident reference number above.

Do you wish to comment on your experience with ITS in relation to this job, go to:
http://its.waikato.ac.nz/Projects/ITIL/questionnaire.shtml

Your original request information:

Incident Number: 11003
Summary: Moodle Query - Quiz results
Details:

From: lishunter [mailto:lishunter@waikato.ac.nz]
Sent: Thursday, 16 August 2012 12:27 p.m.
To: University of Waikato
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

hi, my online test is happening at the moment. the screen shot below shows three questions are colored (35, 22, 39) but i'm not sure why (i'm doing a test run) it's not anything that should be hidden is it?

Tame rowe ats head slenge :-)

Hello Lisa,

Your job request 11003 has now been processed, please read the actions undertaken in relation to your request

Outcome Details:

as per email thread i don't panic - you (as the teacher) will see a different view from students as you are previewing the content attempting it.

Please contact me if you have any further enquiries regarding your job.

WAIKATO
Kind regards  
ITS Service Desk

Should you have any questions or comments regarding this case please do not hesitate to contact the ITS Service desk on Ext. 4008 (B33 4008 from an external phone) or email us at help@waikato.ac.nz quoting the incident reference number above.

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Moodle maintenance scheduled next Wednesday 16th November 2011 at 12pm
By - Wednesday, 9 November 2011, 12:36 PM
Moodle will be unavailable for approximately 1 hour for a small update. This update is nothing as drastic as our previous one on the 26th October (1) and will include various Moodle community fixes including the following two issues:

- **Importing** - this is due to new permissions which will be fixed soon. Please log a job with helpdesk if you need to import to a Summer School paper.
- **Assignment submissions screen** - Teacher accounts no longer show in assignment submission grading screen
- **Assignment receipts** - these are included in the zip downloaded again
- **Lesson activity improvements** - Teachers can now remove the pop-up file from the beginning of the activity. Moodle upgrade status - Wednesday 9th November 2011
- **Panopto Integration** - you can easily share your Panopto recordings with more than one paper. Students are automatically given access when the Panopto block is configured.
- **Turnitin** - Assignments with Turnitin that have been created after the upgrade are working as expected. There are several new fields you may have noticed which allow you to determine which of Turnitin's databases the submissions are checked against (include the student paper database). You can also start the Turnitin website via a link on the submissions page. Note that similarity reports for older pre-upgrade assignments remain in the system but cannot be accessed via the web interface. We continue to work with an external consultant to ensure these links will work in future. Once again, if you require a report but cannot open it please log a job with the helpdesk.

Please do not take a few minutes to view the General Semester
Reminders in this Moodle Users Course for tips on receiving access to papers, importing material and making your paper(s) available to students.
Sandwiched

Between students and support personnel

Other threads, tangled, knotted, at a loose end, with students just as lost as me

Questions

Questions I do not have answers to but are nevertheless thrown my way

My responsibility to teach them to learn how to solve their own problems?

Or pragmatically answer their questions and move the problem away from me?

The first takes more time than I don’t have

The second encourages ignorance.

I (column 2 below)

Become the buffer, punched, squeezed, stretched, between

The ‘client’ student (column 1 below)

and the

‘institution’ technical support (column 3)

In email matters technical

It happens quickly …

Table 2: Email conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT EMAIL</th>
<th>MY EMAIL</th>
<th>IT SUPPORT EMAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Student] I think Moodle crashed this morning when I tried to post my ejournal as it says Error: Database connection failed. It is possible that the database is overloaded or otherwise not running properly. The site administrator should also check that the database details have been correctly specified in config.php. So I'm emailing you as a last resort and I will go see the tech people today to sort out if it's my computer or the system. Sorry for the email but I didn't see</td>
<td>Hi [IT support] is what the student said true and if so, what's the best way to manage it from my end? Send an email to all students allowing an extension????</td>
<td>There were Moodle issues intermittently this morning between 7-8.40am. Up to you whether you want to allow an extension, but it was certainly available last night and is ok now. If you did want to notify students then using the news forum would be appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
another way around it. I can always repost my ejournal to Moodle when its back up. just wanted to get it to you on time

Hi [IT support] a bit urgent so going straight to you. I thought x and I switched off the students being able to see any feedback until after 6pm once the test was closed. Am I able to go into edit function while the quiz is in action or will that *&!R* everything up?

don't panic, you will see a different view from the students as you are previewing the quiz rather than doing it. The settings are ok (although if you change them it won’t stuff anything up). Students will NOT see the feedback when they’ve finished - they will see what they have selected and general quiz feedback which says something like come back after 6pm to see your marks.

helpdesk - please log and resolve a job for this :)

Hi, my online test is happening now. The screenshot shows three qus are coloured (15, 22, 39) but I’m not sure why (I’m doing a test run)... it’s not anything that should be hidden is it?

Hi, my online test is happening now. The screenshot shows three qus are coloured (15, 22, 39) but I’m not sure why (I’m doing a test run)... it’s not anything that should be hidden is it?

Part of a Moodle email from me to students:

...2. also, as a reminder re DMA, read course outline for information as a first step as per lecture last term. unless otherwise arranged with me, upload to YouTube your YouTube address where the file is and your written script is all that you need to enter via Moodle. remember that IF you want to keep it private, then you can choose this when uploading to YouTube. if you’re still worried about uploading to youtube there are plenty of sites that tell you how to do it. including http://www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer=57924

Hi lisa i have finished my DMA and i have tried uploading to the youtube three times and it is not compatible with moviemaker i used. am i able to burn it

Hi [IT support] i've had some students sending me emails about trying to upload to youtube.suggestions for making technology a worthwhile option? there’s 140 of these coming in tomorrow so i hope it’s not

Hi, up to 140 students the day before something is due??? that sounds like the rugby equivalent of a hospital pass. please do not indicate that we can assist at this time. hold the line and we can
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>to disk or on on a usb. sorry about the hasel. kind regards</th>
<th>going to be a headache. can they access technical support for this?</th>
<th>re-assess after the semester to determine if/how you can tweak the assignment. I think you should encourage the students to work together to support each other on how to achieve your assignment. ... and the student having difficulty with ‘moviemaker’ is not searching hard enough or trying hard enough. That programme is more than able to create a video that can be uploaded to youtube. Its amazing what I find when I search for the following phrase: 'how to upload a movie maker file to youtube’. Basic lessons on using google search engine might be needed eh?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| i agree with you but I don’t want to be the meat in the sandwich around expecting students to use technology but not being able to respond when things go wrong and I copy all the emails. I’ve been talking to them all semester about this this [and wasn’t advised there would be problems] and next time I’ll have them do trials before the due date to make sure this sort of thing doesn’t happen while they are in panic mode. But also, this bunch is nowhere near the technosavvy so big gap between what literature is saying and these students’ realities. I’m not into handholding but also not into having their worlds imploded. Perhaps I’ve expected too big a leap given who I’m working with but it’s taken a semester to ‘know’ what sorts of students are here and in this course, I’m not imagining 140 will all panic or have issues (I already know one hasn’t...phew) but also need to know the extent to which they can seek a technology human’s support and...
work somewhere in between. already tried encouraging working together but there are still some that have no friends, are not problem-solvers, do not go to lectures etc and they often have the loudest voices (both literally in taking one’s time AND in the ALL IMPORTANT measures of our teaching… the APPRAISALS!!!! - IF ONLY THEY DIDN’T COUNT)

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<th>work somewhere in between. already tried encouraging working together but there are still some that have no friends, are not problem-solvers, do not go to lectures etc and they often have the loudest voices (both literally in taking one’s time AND in the ALL IMPORTANT measures of our teaching… the APPRAISALS!!!! - IF ONLY THEY DIDN’T COUNT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hi [IT elearning support] i went into moodle to try and ‘assign role’ for a marking tutor. i searched for her name but couldn’t find it. she’s been employed here as a marker this year so not sure why it didn’t come up. can you suggest what i do next to make it possible? she needs to be able to see all students’ ejournal answers and their DMA youtube address and scrip upload. on this second piece of assessment (DMA and script) is it best just to tell students to upload like they have ejournal or should i set up another post? x will be marking ejournals and DMA so if she could choose either ways (dma en masse then ejournal en masses OR one person’s dma then ejournals at once) that would be best set up i’d imagine. she would also need the capability to paste a table with marks and comments that go back to students. is all this possible?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sheer volume of emailing and information processing is blowing my head apart.

Another invitation…time to flick to formal pd. Byte 3 starts up again…

With “1. Getting started”, “2. Paper settings”, and more recently “3. Assessment tools in Moodle workshop” jerking through my Cognitive Stage of learning, the first of the three stages, I walk still somewhat nervously, into Moodle workshop #4 thinking, “Will I ever get to the third stage (autonomous)?” “I am beginning to relax with increasing cognitive familiarity in the language and semiotics of the learning system,” I tell myself in not so many words as I enter the now-familiar training space hidden in one of the university’s basements. My cells feel open: “Perhaps I’m moving into the Associative Stage of learning, the ‘freeing’ stage,” I muse. It seems a bit of a nonsense doing these courses when the courses I teach into don’t use Moodle, but I get autonomy in my first course next semester so perhaps I could implement Moodle as a pedagogical tool for eLearning to investigate the findings of current research that point to the importance of digital literacy for our students. The university seems to value it, at least according to what is said via advertising and with the creation of workshops like this. I too invest precious time excited by the advertised prospects of the applications I hear about, not just in Moodle. In the last university I worked in, BlackBoard was useful but I do remember the angst created with upgrades just before the semester started. I look around the small well-fitted-out computer lab of strangers, none from my department or faculty. The group of eight learners seems such a small number for a university with a staff of six hundred. The first facilitator of four steps up to the teaching computer and introduces us to the workshop’s content. “Playing along with instructions in a low stakes environment is really the way to go,” I reflect, missing an instruction...
and losing my way. One of the other staff is quick to respond to my raised arm. She gets me back on track although I’m not quite sure how she got me there, my eyes too slow to catch where the cursor did its thing! “Concentrate and keep up.” I smile at the screen and flick the mouse around the table, pleased with my new course page ready for hours more play later.

“Damnit. I’ve forgotten how to change these headings,” I curse as I try to recall what I had learned a few days ago in Workshop 4. My good intention of returning to my new course page within a day of learning got wiped out with marking and other administrivia. After hours of trial and error and a timid call to the person who ran the course I feel like giving up on the idea of running a mixed media course that aims to enhance students’ digital literacy. The literature may say that digital literacy and eLearning is necessary for 21st century learning, but no one else seems to give a toss. Moodle v the faculty “learning system”, two sets of staff with differing opinions and advice, unclear copyright issues getting clarified with library staff, seemingly no support for Moodle by others at the staff meeting, students with few mobile digital devices and low literacy, and still so much more to learn and make sense of while still living in the other world of printed course readers, paper outlines and digital naysayers. “It’s isolating.” I feel like punching into my keyboard conversation with the unknown ‘help’ human. I have to “log a job” and wait patiently for a reply, in the meantime my thoughts going elsewhere and this thought thread dissolved until time dries away the millions of other thoughts so this one can recrystallize. “Why can’t I just talk to one human that knows my story and is assigned to help me rather than hoping the ‘help’ person will forward my email request to someone familiar,” I sigh. The world feels like it is closing in as I wait at a time that I cannot afford to wait; semester is looming and I need quick answers to keep my thought thread alive. Even though I’ve already had a private tuition session with one of the eLearning staff, I forget too much too quickly at these information overload sessions, or I later run into problems I didn’t know that I didn’t know. But he is gone again and I feel I must try to get answers myself, after all “I’m not stupid am I? and I’m not afraid to learn or learn to learn,” I say more confidently to my laptop as I flick my thumb across the mouse pad to search for other answers to my problem on the screen.

“The examinations person has ok’d the paper’s exam to be online,” I note as I tick the list of jobs I need to sort out before the semester begins. Last year’s Moodle element of the course was full of dilemmas but it was a good introduction for enabling them to create evidence of their learning in ways they had never before explored. Students cited the helpfulness of other resources embedded in the Moodle course page, their learning through the quizzes, everything being centralised, being able to revise recorded lectures and, best of all, creating a YouTube video for the first time. We also had lots of frustrations together and I took a hit in my course appraisals. In short, I felt blamed for students’ lack of knowledge, they having had little formal exposure to technology or eLearning in semester 1; university systems seem not fully in place; limited technical support for students; my steep learning curve on a ‘needs to know basis’, and for ‘being different’ to the other courses. Another semester began. Some of the bruises were still throbbing, but spurred on by several more professional development courses and an air of “eLearning is expected and normal”, I prepare the next iteration of the same course with the new version of Moodle. I hit “upload” with some sense of accomplishment as the managerialised templated course outline loaded into Moodle. “Nothing like getting locked in before you even get to know your students’ needs.” I roll my eyes. “Where’s the pedagogy in THAT!” My colleagues race to get their course readings into the printery before the semester begins, but I relax knowing that I can add, change and even just link to sources online seconds before they are
needed. Reflecting on the previous iteration of my course I know I have learned a lot of new skills and ways of working but wince at the cost! “Please let this semester be better,” I hear myself, looking at my computer.

Pedagogies and the digital in doing academic work—a discussion

While the digital bytes above are only a small representation of my experiences of academic work, they illustrate some of the complex issues that we deal with as we participate with and in the digital world. Questions of where our self begins and ends in relation to digital technology, how we learn who we are in relation to technology, and how we negotiate relationships with colleagues and others embodying the institution jumped out from my journal. Questions such as these also interact with other questions: what is whose responsibility in the learning and teaching of digital literacies? Who is responsible for the professional development of academic dispositions in relation to technology adoption? Some of these are now considered.

**Pedagogical spaces between human and technology: fleshed and mediated**

Just as learning is considered by social psychologists to take place in the dialogue between people, with the incorporation of digital technology into our work there are pedagogical spaces created between machine, software and flesh. There is no inside or outside, or computer as other, but a mediated set of practices that emerge with the presence of hard/software and human. Ellsworth’s notion of “sensational pedagogy” (2005) suggests I become constituted by the outcomes of my interaction with technology in the context of academic work. Such constitution, if positive, must motivate, challenge and facilitate learning the self as a competent risk-taker embodying intellectual praxis.

In the digital bytes, I experienced something that was quite the opposite to the positive. Instead I experienced the “sensational” as being about incompetence, stress, wasted time, reinventing the wheel, complicated discussion threads, aloneness, frustration, and a loss of energy and confidence to keep trying to learn or help others to learn. For systems and institutions such as universities there are vital considerations necessary for pedagogical processes to emerge with productive, rewarding and generative outcomes for those doing academic work. Neoliberal influences that evoke only business, rather than intellectual responses, without attention to unconditioned academic habitus in a technological field, signal doom for both intellectual work and the economic outcomes of a university. In digital pedagogical spaces “affective somatic responses” (Grosz & Eisenman, 2001, p. xiv) arise out of an assemblage in a similar way to how Ellsworth (2005) writes of architecture and body. The corporeality of one’s flesh in relation to timespace and the digital is pedagogical, creating sets of experiences in learning the academic self. Learning to assemble a digital corporeality, to ‘become’ and ‘be’ digital in academic experience is part of learning to take up an academic self.

If the health of an institution is constituted by the health of those who embody that system, the flow between flesh, pedagogy, and machine should not result in knots, tensions, or dis-ease in the worker. It seems clear that, in terms of digital literacy in academic work, those who are on the ‘richer’ side of the literacy gap will “attain productive stances toward design and tech-savvy identities to a
greater degree than poorer ones” (Gee, 2005, p. 4). Gee continues by pointing out that access to technology alone is not enough but that “mentoring and rich learning systems built around the technologies” (p. 138) is necessary for the full potential of these technologies to be realised. The only technological/digital literacy development that has occurred for me has been through my effort in addition to my expected workload and my own self-motivated seeking of professional development. Many of my students also reported having had little experience or formal development in their previous university work. There were times where the knots, tensions and dis-ease had me questioning my involvement while other staff had an easier time with pen/paper courses, ignoring changes such as Moodle. Were they any poorer? Lankshear and Knobel (2008) suggest such gaps in digital literacy will be tied to success in our present-day world:

Taking an expansive view of digital literacies—one that includes popular cultural practices, everyday practices like workplace blogging, online shopping and participation in online network sites—extends the scope for identifying and understanding points at which these same conducive processes and principles operate within digital literacies that are increasingly part of the everyday lives of educators at large. (p. 14)

Given my experiences, however, I would suggest that in attending to the everyday practices of educators/academics, establishing conducive practices for individual digital engagement as a rewarded part of their workload rather than as opt-in add-ons will see a healthier embodiment of digital engagement and working smarter not harder. Currently, the gap between those working digitally and those not goes unrecognised, and possibly even penalised, by institutional practices. Changing to adopt a more mediated and digitally engaged habitus requires institutional support in terms of time and recognition, technical support, and the necessary hardware and software to experiment and drive change.

**Pedagogies for digital exploration beyond learning the self**

If people are to nurture their souls, they need to feel a sense of control, meaningfulness, even expertise in the face of risk and complexity. They want and need to feel like heroes in their own life stories and to feel that their stories make sense. They need to feel that they matter and that they have mattered in other people’s stories. If the body feeds on food, the soul feeds on agency and meaningfulness. (Gee, 2007, p. 10)

Colin Lankshear and Michelle Knobel work with James Gee’s statement to argue, “agency and meaningfulness are the very stuff of literacies as situated social practices” (2008, p. 8). Yet in the learning of self (Ellsworth, 2005) illustrated in the digital bytes, there is a lot to suggest that there is little or no sense of control, agency or meaningfulness as there is not the time, space and support to take risks and deal with complexity and uncertainty. If an incompetent academic self is the most available subject position in relation to the digital world, learning is more likely to be reduced, damaging or hindering academic work.
Learning takes place when there is time enough to learn and then practice in authentic contexts. Much of our work as academics entails contexts that only arise once a year or semester (for example, setting up a Moodle site: Byte #2), and fluid and emergent contexts that are often high stakes (failing technology during an exam or assignment upload). Success in these contexts requires an availability of technical support as it is needed. Having to pause time, work asynchronously, or pick up the thread of a problem later in order to complete the necessary task is not always an option. The fragmentary and complicated nature of interactions, particularly in high stakes arenas such as student assessment, and where ultimate responsibility lies with the teacher, make for negative outcomes with very material effects. Georgina and Olson (2008) remind us that “technology alone does nothing to enhance pedagogy; successful integration is all about the ways in which technology tools are used and integrated into teaching” (p. 8).

Developing technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006), including setting up blended courses, new practices such as online exams, or introducing students to unfamiliar technologies, requires in-time and on-time dedicated human expertise to inform planning and aid troubleshooting. Without it the university jeopardises losing those academics willing to take risks, willing to engage with digital literacy themselves and willing to incorporate learning into courses for the benefit of student learning. Where other staff and even university systems are resisting such a move it is difficult to step into a subject position that only makes incompetence, increased time lost in trial and error, or frustration available. It is a recipe for working harder, not smarter, and says much about a workplace culture.

Digital literacy as cultural medium—not yet achieved in workplace

The workplace culture seems filled with gaps, gaps between policy and lived experiences, gaps between assumptions about student and academic digital literacy levels, and gaps between learner (student and academic) digital needs and resources for learning. Lankshear and Knobel also talk about a tech-savvy gap:

The distinctive socio-technical accompaniments of digital literacies—the myriad “learning incidentals” that come free with the online and offline learning systems attaching to digital literacy practices within affinity spaces of any kind, but including popular cultural forms—suggest the possibility of addressing “the new gap” (the tech-savvy gap) in such a way that we [simultaneously] address the old gap, the gap in regard to traditional print-based literacy. (2008, p. 14)

Somehow we are caught in a web of gaps, caught by being pulled in different directions with an imperative to have digital content knowledge and the necessary pedagogical content knowledge to facilitate students’ digital learning. That we are all learners and that we might be modelling learning in an uncertain world does not cut it with students. This becomes very clear in their evaluative comments at the end of semester, comments and ratings that play out significantly in annual academic appraisals and promotions.

The ideal of a university being a learning culture sits in sharp contrast with the business culture of client/stakeholder/student, processed by the academic who embodies the university business. If at the same time the culture is not one where enhancing digital literacies, digital systems, and digital learning are embodied comprehensively within the university, other than in policy
documents, intended learning and outcomes may be severely compromised. Given the findings of Georgina and Olson (2008), of “significant correlations between technology literacy and pedagogical practice integration” by faculty... and “that faculty technology training may be maximized for the integration of pedagogy by using the training strategy of small group faculty forums with a trainer” (p. 1), there are clearly helpful institutional strategies imaginable, but are they available in ways that enhance academic work?

**Conclusion: Have I byten off more than anyone can chew? Or is it a case of ‘once byten, twice shy’?**

Our practices synchronously constitute our habitus and the fields within which we are located (Bourdieu, 1990a), so for academic workers to embody digital literacy and eLearning as pedagogy, as intellectual work that enhances the academic field, there needs to be a myriad of nuanced, proactive, and responsive practices enabled within a university. For example, en masse or one-off eLearning professional development that depends on an individual academic’s motivation or equal distribution of technology regardless of technology uptake has not been effective enough for me to feel supported in endeavours to be digitally literate. Nor have my high investments in time and energy resulted in effective or efficient skill or knowledge enhancement. Whether digital technologies are used to liberate teaching from the constraints of time, space and place or to broaden technological and pedagogical horizons, the responses emerging from the field need to include “re-visioning our ideas, practices, and training schemes in order to impart our pedagogical messages” (Georgina & Hosford, 2009, p. 695). That is, the pedagogical messages of the university wanting enhanced digital literacies through the embodied practices of academics needs urgent revisioning if those who are willing are to be supported to embody digital pedagogy that goes beyond technology for technology’s sake.

I emphasize that the nature of academic work needs careful attention. While you ponder the gap/link between the two initial advertisements, one for a technology brand, the other for an academic position at a university, and my experience of technology in a university, I want to emphasize the point through a third source, a Māori whakataukī, to consider what is pivotal for the emergence of a new digital habitus of learning in academic work:

He aha te mea nui o te ao?
He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!
What is the most important thing in the world?
It is people! It is people! It is people!
(http://www.korero.maori.nz/forlearners/proverbs.html accessed 080813)

But what is necessary for the possibilities of competent TPACK academic subject positions to emerge; for those doing academic work to enact human agency and social change that constitutes academic work in relation to positive and possibly even undetermined subject positions with digital technology? A challenge by Rajchman to those interested in pedagogy, is to play the game of thought:

free in its creations not when everyone agrees or plays by the rules, but on the contrary, when what the rules and who the players are is not given in advance, but instead emerges
along with the new concepts created and the new problems posed. (Rajchman, 2000, p. 38)

To me, an engagement with digital technologies and literacies is to provoke what Kennedy describes as “new affectivities, new intensities between people [that] might provide a mutant sensibility which could prove more significant in changing people’s experiences of themselves and the world than any macro-defined politics” (2003, p. 13)—the reason why I got into this “position” in the first place, the position of working with academic praxis.

A visceral sense of lived and embodied sociocultural forces coagulate in academic work/ers, as knowledge makers, as pedagogues, as digital explorers. Like that which my employers are drawing our attention to, academic work presently and in the predicted future, is about an interrelationship with computers (hard/software), technologically savvy workers, and the idea that digital literacy can promulgate education/learning. As the core practice of universities is legitimated as ‘ideas’, then enhancing ideas and shifting paradigms, if not creating new ideas, is core practice. The place of digital literacies and technology in this practice is contentious. However, for us to seek new possibilities, new emergence, recognising the pedagogical limits to our knowledge, as unpleasant as they may be to recognise, seems necessary. This, however, requires considerable support for those willing or required to take that road. As such, supporting academic work as exploration, as timespace freedom, as technorelated may be necessary. As this rhetoric is heralded in policy documents such as those of our own institution, to play with thought in relation to technologies introduces new ways of being in academic work.

Pedagogical moments can be described as having

a sense of enjoyment of not having gotten there yet and of not even being eager to do so because of the suspension between new and old ways of being is in and of itself a very pleasant and engrossing one. (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 172)

For some academics to be supported in adopting and developing a digital habitus, I suggest we need to replace individuals’ digital bytes with pedagogical moments. As well, while time and responsibility are imperatives of such a potential learning space, we need to address removing time and responsibility to avoid overwhelming and unpleasant senses that close possibilities for learning selves. A panicked academic struggling with technology and aware that students (and academic staff reviewers) will be unwilling and/or unable to see the context is not an ideal context for learning. Academic selves are the core to embodying academic work and therefore need palpable and sensory support if change is to occur.

I wonder what it would take for our experiences of academic work to parallel the opening advertisement? Smarting, in a negative sense, is not a useful outcome for university business or for educational change to be positive, proactive, sustainable, or even intellectually, digitally, or pedagogically smart. Returning to the above whakatauākī, for digital change to occur it is about the university’s people, those doing academic work. They need support, reward, and motivation to develop a digital habitus. To aid this the nature and extent of smarting needs to be understood to inform digital change.
References


Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2008). Introducing TPCK. In AACTE Committee on Innovation and Technology (Ed.), The handbook of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) for
educators (pp. 3–29). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.