

New learning

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The new technologies are often called 'disruptive'. Older institutions of communication are today undergoing a process of transformation. Wikipedia has effectively meant the end of the old, print encyclopedia. Blogs and online news sources have become a threat to the conventional newspaper. The music publishing and distribution industry is undergoing transformation. Traditional television is facing stiff competition from video upload sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, with content made on devices as cheap and easy to use as a smart phone. Anyone can create a podcast and broadcast to the world.

One common feature of all these developments is that more people than ever before are creating and broadcasting information they have put together, ideas they have developed and feelings they have. This used to be the specialist job of journalists, television professionals, professional authors and researchers. The rest of us were audiences, readers and viewers.

Now anyone can be a media producer. Millions in fact are. If we were for a moment to think optimistically about the future, we might be able envisage a society where everyone is not just a consumer of culture and knowledge as they were in our media past, but active, responsible and participating citizens. In our work and community lives, we could all be knowledge producers and knowledge sharers.

We believe that change may come to schools which is just as disruptive as these changes in media systems and industries. As teachers, we need to take control of these changes and make sure they are for the better. This is an opportunity to explore where learning happens best and new, more engaging ways of communicating, relating, thinking, learning, teaching and assessing.