CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

UF Video Illustrates Changes in Technology, Education

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UF Information Technology

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Table of Contents

UF Video Illustrates Changes in Technology, Education .............................................3
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With more and more University of Florida professors utilizing the Internet and World Wide Web as a routine part of teaching class and conducting research, we're beginning to realize how much this new technological advance has changed education, among other things.

The UF College of Business Administration (CBA) illustrates these revolutions in a video it produced to accompany the speech, "Paradigm Shift: The Promise of Information Technology," given by author and consultant Don Tapscott at the EDUCOM '95 conference. Many administrators from NERDC belong to EDUCOM and occasionally attend its conferences. "EDUCOM is a nonprofit consortium of higher education institutions that facilitates the introduction, and access to and management and use of information resources in teaching, learning, scholarship, and research," according to EDUCOM literature.

Tapscott discusses and outlines the new world that's been shaped by the Internet, to the tune of screen shots, movie clips, and text from the Web, all of which were added by the CBA. The college showed the tape to NERDC's Instruction and Research (I&R) Users' Committee during the committee's May meeting. Copies of the videotape are free to any UF individual or department wishing to show it to UF audiences.

Technological changes have brought a revolution in people's way of thinking, learning, and doing business, according to Tapscott, author of Digital Economy.

In the video, Tapscott reviews changes in learning which evolved following the creation and popularization of networking that we call the Internet.

Tapscott illustrates the shift from universities as being the sole repository of knowledge to corporations forming their own educational facilities for the sole purpose of training employees.

He says that corporate training is growing much faster than new universities are being created. Some educational institutions are working to remake themselves, but Tapscott says this is happening very slowly.

"We've got professors teaching using pre-Gutenberg methods -- with handwritten notes, dumping a lecture on students," Tapscott says.

The new university, according to Tapscott, will involve the student with text hyper-linked to movies, photos, and other forms of multimedia. The curriculum must change too. He points to an example in Canada: "The president (of River Oaks High School), Jerry Smith, said to me, 'What are you teaching when a kid is walking down through the street where Michelangelo used to live? Are you teaching art? History? Mathematics or geography? The technology has really caused us to rethink the whole nature of the curriculum,' " Tapscott said.

He also explores other changes in learning environments: the linking of human intellect though miles of computer networks.

"Different ages have been characterized by the use of a natural resource. We had the Iron Age, the Bronze Age and the Steel Age. This new age of networked intelligence can be dubbed the 'Age of Sand' because more and more physical things: books, lecture notes, reports, cash,
invoices, ...all of these physical forms of information are becoming charged particles on silicon racing thorough networks of glass. They become bits," he said.

"We're not just linking computers, we're linking human ingenuity," he said.

In the new paradigm we are no longer constrained by time and space: "Universities of the future will be built without brick and mortar," he says. As he speaks, a scene from a Web page flashes onto the television: students in Canada can interact with their Tokyo counterparts for their spiders project.

He says these changes aren't without peril, though. For one thing, paradigm shifts are difficult. They are usually met with resistance by those who have the most to lose.

But, if we're looking for leadership, be prepared to look anywhere, Tapscott says.

"We documented in the book a story of a secretary who was the critical person in the transformation of a division of a bank and she had what it took to be a leader," Tapscott said.

To view this exclusive UF video production and learn more about how a networked society has changed our economy and education, and promises to mold our future, please contact Donna Johnson at the College of Business Administration at 392-6873, ext. 1265.

Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

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