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Book Review

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Herrington J. et al., (editors). 2009. New technologies, new pedagogies: Mobile learning in higher education. Technology & Learning Research Lab: University of Wollongong. 138 pp. ISBN: 978-1-74128-169-9 (online). <http://ro.uow.edu.au/newtech/>.

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This work comprises the outputs from a two year project, entitled New Technologies: New Pedagogies, involving a range of educators and researchers in Australia. From the introduction this book aims to explore the use of mobile devices (m-devices) in higher education learning scenarios, coupled with good pedagogical examples. The chapters for the most part have been subjected to peer review to ensure quality.

The book opens with an introductory chapter that examines the proliferation and ubiquity of m-devices, and the moves towards providing mobile learning (m-learning) experiences for users; from the nascent emergent applications to the modern examples. These are embodied by the case studies in other chapters. Interestingly, the authors suggest that most uses of m-devices, within a curriculum setting to date, have followed older and familiar pedagogical modes, rather than examining the new potentialities that these devices offer. The authors' hope is that this book will serve to exemplify the best of these new paradigms.

The introduction expands on the overall project aims, scope and methodological underpinnings of m-learning, before going into more detail over the twelve individual case studies covered in later chapters. The educator with an interest in new approaches to using m-devices within their teaching will be able to glean considerable inspiration from these project sketches alone, without further consultation of the case studies.

In the main body of the work the chapters are formatted like academic papers; complete with abstract, contents and cited references. Given this modular nature, there is no need for a reader to consult the whole work. While consultation of the whole volume would be of interest to many, through reading the introduction and contents listing it is possible to cherry-pick the sections of the work most apposite to your own interests.

Chapters cover the application of m-learning and m-devices in everything from professional development to child and adult education, along with various discipline-specific case studies. The final chapter takes up the importance of sound m-learning design principles underpinning developments.

Some chapters (number 6 for example) do assume that the reader is expertly acquainted with educational theory, and can initially be hard going for a newcomer to the field. However, given that a sound understanding of the pedagogical and technological aspects of m-devices is essential for their exploitation, this is understandable. That is not to say that the text is inaccessible to the more casual reader, only they will be less likely to gain the maximal benefit from consultation of the case studies.

Surprisingly for so visual a topic images are sparsely used in the work, being for the most part rare screenshots of a project element. A few charts and slightly more tables of information are included

within most chapters. They are adequate, but do little beyond basic enhancement of the textural content. In colour on screen they do add a little visual pep, but do little as a monochrome print out.

Given the modular structure of the book it will come as no surprise that cross-referencing and indexing is notably absent from this work. This will come as a disappointment to the reader seeking to dip into specific aspects without the need to consult the whole chapter or entire work. Given the modern hyper-linked learning expectation of many readers, this seems a rather conventional approach in such a modern discourse.

That this book is available to download freely as individual chapters or as a single PDF is a boon to the reader who would like to carry it with them on a mobile reader.

While the introduction suggests that campuses are “awash with mobile technologies...in student pockets”, this reviewer feels a counter point must be made, that it is easy to assume that all students use and have access to sophisticated m-devices. Care must be taken to ensure that by going down these admittedly exciting and innovative educational routes that a proportion of the students are not disenfranchised from the educational process. However, the opportunities exemplified in this work are clearly powerful.

For a book that could be easily dismissed at first glance as a simple collection of working papers from a lone Australian institution, the editors and project managers have crafted a rich source book of techniques, methodologies and practical considerations, underpinned with sound educational theory. A steep learning curve means that this is not a book for a neophyte, but with even a limited background in m-learning or modern pedagogy there remains much of considerable worth that can be taken away.

For the librarian, or indeed any educator with more than a passing interest in m-learning, there is much that can be gained or even adapted wholesale from this work. If there is any caveat it is that the coverage given to securing funding or sufficient other resources to engage with m-learning is perhaps not covered to any great depth. This is a minor issue, and anyone with a passion for information literate educational endeavour would profit from consulting this book.