



Accepted Papers

Bileta Annual Conference 2016

Learning / Technology
Paul Maharg, ANU College of Law

This year The Law Teacher will publish a Special Issue on legal education and technology, on the nearly tenth anniversary of the last such special edition in 2015. Edited by Maharg and consisting of an editorial and six articles, it attempts to map and exemplify the present and future use of digital technologies in legal education. In my editorial I argue that the fused but troubled relationship signified by the phrase ‘learning/technology’ is now much more complex than it was a decade ago. Not only is the scale of technologies available to us and their use greater than it was a decade ago, but the relationships between disciplines, education providers, regulators and many others have become more complex, too.

While the relational complexity of the field has increased, our reliable knowledge of what is happening within it has decreased: we now know less about what our law schools are doing as regards learning/technology than we did a decade ago. Not only is there no central archive of practice but we do not map and analyse the work that is already there, in meta-reviews and systematic reviews, for ourselves and others to read.

Theoretically, too, our work needs to be more sophisticated in explaining why we do what we do. We need to be much more aware how, in the words of Bourdieu, the logic of the field has historically operated to privilege some concepts and practices and not others. A decade on from the first Special Issue, and without that awareness, the history of learning/technology remains much more fragmentary and inarticulate than it should be, and its position in the hierarchy of research domains a subaltern and immature discipline.

The Special Issue Editorial calls for academic and professional bodies and groups that are nationally and internationally active in legal education to begin the process of developing and organising research infrastructures for learning/technology and its dissemination to the communities interested in and affected by legal education and its improvement. In this presentation I shall discuss and exemplify the issues raised above, and we shall explore the ways that such research infrastructures may be achieved.

Keywords:

Legal education, regulation; technology-enhanced learning