

Lecturers' use of web 2.0 in the faculty of information science and communications at Mzuzu university, Malawi

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Abstract

The study reported on in this article investigated the use of Web 2.0 technologies by lecturers in the Faculty of Information Science and Communications at Mzuzu University (MZUNI), Mzuzu, Malawi. By distributing a questionnaire to 19 lecturers, conducting follow-up interviews with seven lecturers and analysing the curricula, the study showed that between 10 (58.8%) and 13 (76.5%) lecturers use Wikipedia, YouTube, blogs, Google Apps and Twitter to accomplish various academic activities, such as handing out assignments to students; receiving feedback from students; uploading lecture notes; searching for content; storing lecture notes; and carrying out collaborative educational activities. The study adopted the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (Taylor and Todd 1995) and the theory's elements that strongly affected lecturers' use of the technologies according to the results included attitude and perceived behaviour control. The study also found that poor Internet access remains the key stumbling block towards a successful adoption of Web 2.0 technologies by lecturers at MZUNI. To this end, the study recommends that the newly established Department of ICT Directorate with support from MZUNI management should install campus-wide Wi-Fi and improve Internet bandwidth so that lecturers' access to the Internet is not limited to their offices but rather is available in the teaching rooms across the campus.

Introduction

Advancements in information and communications technologies (ICTs) have profoundly revolutionised higher education especially with regard to the delivery and presentation of lectures. Windschitl (1998) gives a far-sighted description about the role of the Internet and its associated technologies in higher education in the 21st century. He predicted that the World Wide Web (hereafter Web) would not only function as an information or content repository for learners and their lecturers but, among others, it could be transformed to present students and lecturers with innovative ways to instantly create, share, distribute and search educational content. Indeed, slowly but surely, web-based courses are replacing the face-to-face mode of course delivery. In South Africa, for example, Zinn (2009, 159) observes that ICT is gradually impacting the delivery of higher education through the emergence and adoption of online or e-learning programmes. What Windschitl (1998) predicted has become a reality: the recent emergence of Web 2.0 technologies is affording students and lecturers an opportunity to instantly create, share, distribute and search educational content. The challenge, however,

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