

**Center for Instructional
Development and Research**

100 Gerberding Hall
Box 351265
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-1265
Phone: 206.543.6588
Fax: 206.685.1213
Email: cidr@u.washington.edu

<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb>

Creating Community with Digital Technologies

New technologies – for example, electronic portfolios, blogs, and wikis – are making it easier for students to create, store, organize, and share their work. These emerging Web-based technologies can support participatory online learning communities that foster collaboration, creativity, and public engagement.

Instructors may be able to blend these tools into the existing online presence for their course, such as a website, but many of these tools can be used to support course activities independent of other technologies or technical expertise. This issue of the Bulletin is designed to identify ways that instructors can use these tools (or combinations of tools) to support different types of active collaboration and community-building among learners in their classes.

DISCUSSING AS A COMMUNITY

- *Blogs* can support student journaling, displaying reverse-chronological, time-stamped posts by one or more student authors. In response to each post, students can provide comments on peers' written work. *Example: Blogger*
- *Discussion boards* can support online conversations, typically organized by topic ("threads") around a particular comment or question. Multiple conversations between the instructor and students can take place simultaneously across several threads. *Example: Catalyst GoPost*
- *Electronic mailing lists* rely upon email to convey concise, timely announcements related to the course. Students can reply to questions and send comments to the entire class, and each student receives every message sent to the list. *Example: UW C&C-supported Mailman lists*

SHARING AS A COMMUNITY

- *Image and video sharing websites* allow students to upload and share digital files such as photographs or videos. Students can annotate their work and leave comments about others' images or videos. Instructors can use these tools both as part of classroom activities and as a platform to enable students to share self-produced content. *Example: Flickr, YouTube*
- *Podcasts* are digital audio or video recordings distributed online that students can download. Instructors can record lectures, point to other podcasts, or have students produce their own recordings to share online. Students who subscribe to podcasts are notified automatically as soon as new podcasts are made available.
- *Wikis* are websites that allow groups of students to collaboratively write and edit online without requiring extensive knowledge of Web publishing and design. Students can work together on a project by composing text and modifying others' contributions to produce one or more common documents via a single website. *Example: PBwiki*

Information for People who Teach
at the University of Washington

Continued on back >>



COLLECTING AND ORGANIZING AS A COMMUNITY

- *Electronic portfolios* allow students to reflect upon their progress as they collect, annotate, and arrange text, images, and other products of their learning. *Example: Catalyst Portfolio*
- *Tagging websites* allow students to store and assign descriptive keywords (“tags”) to their digital photographs, videos, or bookmarked URLs. Students can organize their collections with personal tags, and instructors might also ask students to apply a common tag to provide one-click access to class-related items. Students can see who shares similar items and can view files shared by other users. Instructors can incorporate these tools through assignments such as photo journals, video portfolios, or shared bibliographies. *Example: Flickr, YouTube, del.icio.us*

HOW CAN CIDR HELP?

CIDR staff can work with you as you plan, implement, and assess ways that you use technology to help students learn in your classes. Call or email to arrange an appointment with a CIDR consultant.

For more information and links to examples, see CIDR’s Digital Communication Technology Chart: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/Bulletin/TechnologyChart.pdf>



Center for Instructional Development and Research

CIDR promotes excellence in teaching and learning at the University of Washington through its work with individual faculty and TAs, departments, campus-wide initiatives, and University leaders. CIDR staff are available year-round to collaborate on the design, implementation, and assessment of ways to advance teaching and learning for all students in the diverse UW community. Consultations are confidential and offered at no charge to UW faculty, TAs, and departments.

If you have questions about teaching and learning, or you would like to find out more about working with CIDR, you can call us at 543-6588, send a message to cidr@u.washington.edu, or visit our web site:

<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/>



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL