

## Book Review of *The New Digital Shoreline: How Web 2.0 and Millennials are Revolutionizing Higher Education*

*The New Digital Shoreline: How Web 2.0 and Millennials are Revolutionizing Higher Education.* Roger McHaney, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2011, 1st Edition, 247 pages. ISBN: 978-1579224608

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In higher education, the integration of new technologies and pedagogies of instruction is often a source of apprehension. *The New Digital Shoreline*, written by Roger McHaney of Kansas State University, is a guide for understanding millennial learners along with current technologies and strategies used in college classrooms. The audience for this book would likely be faculty and administrators with limited knowledge of the shifting expectations for technology in higher education. On the spectrum of technology adoption ranging from innovators to laggards, *The New Digital Shoreline* is best suited for late majority adopters. The book is organized around the metaphor of exploring a new world, one with an unfamiliar population, landscape, and culture; the author is your guide on a journey to successfully adapt to the realities of this new world.

In Chapter 2, “Indigenous Populations on the Shoreline”, McHaney describes tech-savvy millennials and their preferences for engaging with learning technologies. There is a tendency in popular media to stereotype millennials, but the author is careful to provide helpful insights without overgeneralizing this diverse generation of learners. In this chapter, McHaney also introduces the idea of “time-slicing.” Millennial students are often categorized as multi-taskers, diluting their short attention spans between many digital distractions. Instead of multi-tasking, McHaney believes students may be time-slicing, or shifting attention quickly between tasks, continually re-prioritizing but focusing on one task at a time. Suggestions are provided on how instructors can help students manage time-slicing in an environment where learners must sift through continuous streams of information. McHaney also believes instructors should design learning experiences to help students foster skills needed to search for information from a variety of places rather than focusing on memorization of information. Educators must determine which skills and abilities are important and transferrable and which can be ceded to technology (p. 51–53). This chapter’s section on “Higher Education’s Opportunity with Tech-Savvy Millennials” provides solid advice to help faculty reframe how they approach teaching upcoming generations of learners.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five introduce a variety of educational technologies. Chapter Three explores platforms and environments for learning. Chapter Four focuses specifically on how Web 2.0 and social technologies affect the learning environment, while Chapter Five provides suggestions on how to harness Web 2.0 content and applications in the classroom. A lot of time is spent in these chapters explaining specific technologies. While admittedly helpful for novices, these chapters will likely be of less interest to those with a decent understanding of current technologies. McHaney



examines the pedagogy behind the tools but spends too much time explaining the many specific tools and providers. Like any book that describes current technologies, this information will become outdated as tools and trends evolve. Despite these criticisms, the author still makes a number of salient points. Especially important is McHaney's emphasis on the fundamental transformation underlying the use of educational technologies.

Chapters Six and Seven continue with advice on how faculty can change their instructional strategies to better align with student expectations and evolving pedagogies. McHaney encourages the rebuilding of higher education in response to its changing environment as he shares a narrative about the rebuilding of small town after development of a flood dam. Millennial students expect their classroom experience to prepare them for a job market which is increasingly global, interconnected, and technologically enabled (p. 156). Chapter Seven gets to the heart of how recent changes in technology have gone hand-in-hand with new approaches to teaching and learning. A helpful chart on pages 177 and 178 outlines different learning theories as they relate to millennial students. Examination of the connectivist classroom is especially critical for instructors who may desire to build upon students' natural tendencies to learn through "networks of friends, online searches, communities of practice, and through social networking" (p. 146). McHaney also points out how various technologies can support different learning theories. The book concludes with Chapter Eight, and the section titled "Coping As a Teacher" leaves the readers with next steps for how to begin exploring the new digital shoreline.

*The New Digital Shoreline's* exploration of millennial learners and the evolution of educational technology and pedagogy is relevant for both face-to-face and online educators. McHaney believes higher education's "long statistical tail" may increase the market for distance learning, especially offerings by reputable universities and professors, leading to increased competition based on niche factors and costs (p. 205–207). McHaney states, "It is almost certain that, in decades to come, our linear educational systems will be replaced with nonhierarchical structures marked by self-directed, individualized, and customized learning experiences that draw on multiple resources" (p. 213). Key insights for educators can be found in the author's examination of the inextricable co-evolution of society and education. McHaney succeeds in grounding each conversation with practical advice on how faculty can adapt to technologies, instructional strategies, and students found on the new digital shoreline of higher education.