

Friday 9 December

11.30-12.30

Conwy

Researching the digital academy: questioning the myth-makers, the mockers and the messiahs (RS 4)

Facilitated by:

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In this discussion, we will pose questions around the nature and extent of changes in contemporary academic practices that might be attributed to changes in the digital landscape. Given that most online engagement consists of new forms of social interaction, the use (or non-use) of technologies is now constitutive of our academic identities in often unexpected ways. We are developing our understandings of our 'digital selves' and digital practices as they emerge.

We are therefore interested in exploring the various assumptions (myths) that circulate about the nature of these changes and their impact on academic practices. Different positions have emerged in popular debates: e.g. that undergraduate students are 'digital natives' who encounter an out-of-touch academic world; that new forms of social media have created democratic and open educational processes; or conversely that the digital age represents the loss of traditional scholarship as younger generations learn through Wikipedia rather than books. We wish to question how it has come to be that to take sides with those who deplore or celebrate the digital age is increasingly to stake an identity claim, and ask whether there are positions somewhere between the mockery and the mindless championing of all things digital.

Questions for discussion:

- To what extent does the 'digital natives' / 'digital immigrants' binary apply to your context? What other factors do you think influence student (and staff) digital capabilities / literacies?
- What is your reaction to the utopian / dystopian discourses surrounding new technologies and higher education?
- What do we know about our own practices and identities that would help us find a middle ground, and what else do we need to know?
- Where should research be focused in order to help tease out some of these issues?

Please join the Twitter discussions for this session: #srhe11dig

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