

The Perfect E-Storm: Emerging Technology, Enormous Learner Demands, Enhanced Pedagogy, and Erased Budgets

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Abstract

Emerging technologies - such as electronic portfolios, computer games and simulations, digital books, and wireless and mobile computing - are generating waves of new opportunities in higher education. However, the effective use of teaching technology involves far more than simply shoveling classroom content onto a Web site. Instructors must be trained how to motivate online students and address their individual learning styles and needs. As enrollments in online courses surge, today students immersed in an increasingly digital world are seeking richer and more engaging learning experiences. Amid the rising tide of expectations, instructors are exploring innovative ways to use technology to foster interaction, collaboration, and excitement for learning. While we may not realize it, we have entered the perfect electrical storm, where technology, the art of teaching, and the needs of learners are converging. Now add to that a fourth storm, erased budgets, that stand directly in the way of expensive technology purchases and risky program initiatives surrounding the other three storms. Given these monetary constraints, we need to think carefully about the speed and direction in which we are headed, before venturing farther into these uncharted waters.

