



## iPods and Wikis and Blogs (Oh My!): Recreational Products As E-Learning Tools

*“The average person spends about nine hours a day using some type of media...  
in excess of anything we would have envisioned 10 years ago.”*

Mark Ransford, [News Center](#), Ball State University, 9/23/05

In the rapidly evolving world of technological change and opportunity, three recreational products unexpectedly impacting e-learning are the Apple iPod, wiki and weblog (a.k.a.blog). This issue examines both their background and uses in the world of online education today.

### Apple Computer's iPod Background and Hardware

- [“Apple Unveils Video iPod.”](#) Report in *Apple Insider*, 10/12/05, about an iPod that plays video, in addition to audio, recordings. See also [Apple Introduces iPod Nano](#), Apple news release, 9/7/05, about an iPod thinner than a pencil that holds 1000 pieces of music or 25,000 photos.
- [iPod](#). Entry in the [Wikipedia](#) online encyclopedia, with a definition (“a brand of digital...player designed and marketed by Apple Computer”), plus history, development and iPod capabilities.
- [iPod in the Classroom](#). Apple's own Website on maximizing iPod use with students. It includes how-to guides, tutorials, discussions, technical support and more.
- [Leadership Institute Blog: iPods and iTunes in Higher Education](#). Weblog maintained by the Apple Digital Campus Exchange with assorted postings on the academic use of iPods.

### Examples of Podcasting and Other Applications

- [“eLearning Utopia: iPods Meet Course Management in the Classroom.”](#) Article by Robert Viau, Georgia College & State University (GCSU) in *Campus Technology*, August 2005, about his use of the iPod in a WebCT managed e-course. For much more on iPod use at GSCU, see [their Website](#) devoted to that subject.
- [“iPods Offer Note-Taking Alternatives to Lectures.”](#) Article by Becca Garrison in *The Cavalier Daily*, 9/16/05, about Coursecast, a service being piloted at some Texas universities by the Pick-a-Prof company. It allows students to download MP3 files of lectures for \$5 each. (Profits are split between the company and the professors.)
- [Podcasting](#). Entry in the [Wikipedia](#) online encyclopedia, that provides the history and uses of the concept of podcasting, which it defines simply as “publishing programs via the Internet.”
- [“Podcasting Made Easy.”](#) Article by Elliot Van Buskirk in *ZDNetNews*, 4/28/05, on the author's experience with a variety of portals and other online tools that make podcasting use easier.
- [“Podcasts a New Frontier of Higher Education.”](#) Article in *The Daily Nebraskan*, 10/04/05, about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's distribution of an iPod to all incoming freshmen. See also a [similar article](#), by Brock Read, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3/2/05, about a Drexel University (PA) iPod giveaway program and [another article](#), in *Inside Higher Education News*, 6/16/05, with an analysis of the first year of iPod use at Duke University (NC).
- [“Seriously, iPods Are Educational.”](#) Article by Brock Read in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3/18/05. about ways colleges are investigating for academic uses of the iPod.
- [Podcast.net – The Podcast Directory](#). Popular Website that allows subject searching for available podcasts. It includes a Learning and Instruction category with hundreds of entries. Another major search tool is [Yahoo Podcasts](#). See also [Finding Podcasts Faster](#), an Associated Press release in *TechnologyReview.com*, 11/18/05, about new podcast locator tools [Blinkx](#), [Podzinger](#), and [Podscope](#).
- [Princeton Video Podcasting](#). Report in *Podcasting News*, 10/28/05, about the addition of vodcasts (video podcasts), to Princeton University's (NJ) podcast service.

## Weblogs (Blogs) and Wikis Background

- **Blog.** Entry in the [Wikipedia](#) online encyclopedia, that defines Weblog or blog as a “Web-based publication consisting primarily of periodic articles.” They range in scope from one author (blogger) to a large community of writers. Blog Websites are collectively called the blogosphere.
- **“[Blogging: An Introduction.](#)”** Article by Bobby Hobgood on the Learn North Carolina Website about the uses of blogs in education as journal, diary, publication or administrative tool, and as a research source. A similar article is **“[Weblogs in Education: Bringing the World to the Liberal Arts Classroom](#)”** by Sarah Lohnes in *NITLE News* (2:1), Winter 2003.
- **“[Campuses Make Way for the Worldwide Wiki.](#)”** Article by Rich Seeley in *Campus Technology*, 10/6/05, With the noteworthy quote “Where blogs provoke debate, wikis promote cooperation,” the article provides useful information about wikis in the classroom.
- **[Intro to Weblogs. Intro to Wikis.](#)** Websites maintained by the University of Calgary (Canada) that offer a detailed look at what a blogs and wikis are, and what they can do in the context of higher education. See also **[Weblogs for Use with ESL Classes](#)**, a paper by Aaron Patric Campbell, Ryujou University (Japan), in *The Internet TESL Journal* (4:2), 2/03, on the advantages of classroom blogging and **[Writing with Weblogs](#)** by Kristen Kennedy in *TechLearning.com*, 2/13/03, on the blog as “an emergent genre...for students to publish online.”
- **“[New Search Engines Help Users Find Blogs.](#)”** Article by Vauchini Vara, copied from *The Wall Street Journal*, 9/7/05, reporting on new blog-searching products like **[Technorati](#)**, **[Feedster](#)**, **[Bloglines](#)**, **[IceRocket](#)**, and **[DayPop](#)**. (This article was also listed in the previous BEEP.)
- **Wiki.** Entry in the [Wikipedia](#) online encyclopedia defining a wiki as a Web application that allows users to add and edit content. Also contains more information about the workings of wikis.

### Examples

- **[Blog@Case.](#)** Case Western University’s (IL) Weblog hosting system for use by the university community. Includes instructions on how to set up and use a blog within the Case framework.
- **[BPRIME Wiki.](#)** Also known as Best Practices in Mathematical Education, this wiki is a collaborative effort to collect teaching ideas and practices.
- **[SCU Launches Student Blogs.](#)** Press release by Santa Clara University (CA), 10/11/05, about its interactive student recruitment initiative using Web-based online journals.
- **[Teaching, Learning, and Other Uses for Wikis in Academia.](#)** Article by Julie Higdon in *Campus Technology*, 11/16/05, about the challenges of wiki use at the University of Southern California’s Center for Scholarly Technology.
- **[Weblogs in Higher Education.](#)** Blog “devoted to the understanding of...pedagogical and other uses of weblogs and wikis in higher education.” Maintained by Ken Smith, Indiana University.
- **[Wikipedia.](#)** Free, online encyclopedia authored and edited by just about anyone on any subject.

## BEEP’s Best Bets

### Administration

- **“[Student’s Homework Site Nets Him \\$1.25M.](#)”** Article by Corey Murray in *eSchool News Online*, 10/26/05, about the sale of a student-created Website SurfYourWork.com, a Web-based school management system which was highlighted in a previous BEEP.
- **“[UMass First Microsoft IT Showcase School.](#)”** Article by Robert Brumfeld in *eSchool News Online*, 11/1/05, that announces UMass as the first of five IT leaders to receive Microsoft funding.

### Free Information Sources

- **[Google Earth.](#)** Yet another Google effort that “puts a planet’s worth of imagery and other geographic information right on your desktop.” Basic service is free, with low-cost add-ons.
- **“[Wikibooks to Offer Free eTexts for Education.](#)”** Article by Robert Brumfeld in *eSchool News Online*, 11/2/05, about the **[Wikimedia Foundation’s](#)** initiative to create collaboratively written online K-20 textbooks using wiki Web publishing software it provides.

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