**Time to change the colour of your umbrella?**

E-learning has become more important in Higher Education because it can bridge the digital divide between rural and urban communities. Developing countries use educational technology because it can provide quality learning to an increasing number of students at a lower cost. South Africans benefit from free open source software and social software. (Matodzi, Herselman & Hay, 2007) The competences associated with e-learning come under the umbrella of information literacy (Andretta, 2005).

Information literacy training is important because high on the list of essentials for collegiate success are the abilities to find, manipulate, and use information. “Not just information that can be easily downloaded from the Web, but information that meets standards of accuracy and academic rigor. While colleges generally acknowledge that first-year students are unlikely to develop those abilities on their own, we don’t do much to help them.” Kavulya (2003). Today’s incoming students have no formal opportunities to learn how to conduct research and find information (Markey, 2008). Information literacy training should develop independent learning where students know how to use information and can ask informed questions (Bundy, 2005). Librarians are responsible for information literacy training at academic universities.
Students do not always have a very positive opinion of libraries and librarians. Information literacy training sessions can be boring and uninteresting to students. (Doshi, 2006). “It is important that librarians got to know their students and try to understand what kind of tutorial and presentation will engage, include and motivate the students during information literacy training.“ (Doshi, 2006)

Librarians can motivate these attitudes and meet student’s preferences by changing the colour of the umbrella (information literacy training tutorials). If there is one thing that students and librarians can both agree on, it is the desperate need for more conversational, two-way methods of teaching library skills. Students are begging us to make these sessions more interesting. Our solution is to design, test, and evaluate games that teach students how to use resources and discovery tools. (Markey, 2008) “By integrating a gaming element into the library skills classroom, it is possible to improve learning in this critical area while also portraying libraries and librarians in a better (i.e., less “boring”) light. “(Doshi, 2006). The stigma that games are only for play and not for learning has been overcome. (van Eck, 2006).

“The word “game” usually refers to entertainment, but at the core of games are challenging practical activities, such as planning problem-solving coordinated interaction and analysis” (De Azevedo Filho, 2006:2).

Motivation alone may not be enough it can be enhanced by cognitive engagement that mediates the way for deeper learning and achievement.
Games can add engagement especially if a learner is reluctant to learn.

“Digital game based learning comes only when engagement and learning are both high” (Prensky, 2001:149)

Engagement is certainly necessary when it comes to the military. The US military can be seen as the true believers in games based learning. They spend billions of dollars to improve simulators that are used for their game based learning (Prensky, 2001)

The United States Air Force developed a game after pilots accidentally shot down two friendly aircrafts. The motivation of the game is to save lives.

A game based system was developed for the learning of foreign language and culture. “TLCTS courses are in widespread military use, particularly by the US Marines and US Army.” (Johnson, Valente & Heuts, 2008:2)
The department of library services at the University of Pretoria developed a 3D game for information literacy training. Students at the main campus as well as the medical campus played the game during information literacy training. Feedback as well as test results were very positive. Feedback from the general training classes include comments e.g. “insanely cool, a good way to learn more about the library, and quite helpful. Most of the feedback was very positive.

Comments from the medical students were also positive. The students liked the game and would not change anything in the future. Most of the students passed their tests.

Much more can be done to improve the game and to embed information literacy standards in the game. Students’ comments clearly showed that we are on the right track. It is time to change the colour of the umbrella!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Prensky, M. 2003, Digital Game Based Learning, Paragon House, Minnesota.