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A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR THE SURVIVAL OF OUR PROFESSION: APPLYING THE INFORMING SCIENCE FRAMEWORK TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This keynote applies the Informing Science framework to a problem in higher education: how to keep courses up-to-date in the rapidly changing research environment. The keynote starts with an amusing, yet poignant, recollection of computers, and particularly computer-assisted instruction (CAI) systems that are no longer with us, leading to a discussion of lessons we should learn from their misfortune. These lessons include the need to disintegrate the roles of content specialist, instructional specialist, and technology specialist. Also, the content of CAI must be disintegrated from the authorware and hardware technologies. Lastly, the keynote points out the need for making content of CAI non-proprietary, while acknowledging the impediments to this occurring.

The keynote continues, with the audience hoping that there is a point to the keynote, by pointing out the limitations in prior CAI systems' longevity also relates to university's practice of assigning to professors and lecturers the split roles as researchers and teachers, as is common in higher education. Under the current paradigm, research and teaching commonly are completely disparate activities, often competing for the limited time and energy of the faculty member.

The keynote then briefly describes the Informing Science Framework. This framework considers the task of informing in terms of three distinct environments and sub-tasks. It is a meta-model in that it considers Information Development at three levels of abstraction.

The keynote continues by applying the Informing Science Framework to create a Higher Education Framework that overcome the problems (pointed out above) with the current paradigm of research and teaching. In essence, the paper suggests disintegrating the roles of the professor/teacher in higher education into the roles of researcher, instructional designer, course designer, and course implementer.

The paper concludes by describing both the advantages of and impediments to implementing the solution proposed by the framework, both for Higher Education and for CAI in general.

Keywords

Informing Science, Computer Assisted Instruction, Framework, History of CAI

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