

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY BERNARD J. LUSKIN

Who might today's CIO be tomorrow?

Media studies are today's "Stargate" for IT, HR and teaching and learning professionals

Will future opportunities in higher education come to those with vision and new skills? If you believe that's likely, then keep your eye on "Media Studies."

Communications technology and information technology have been merging and blending for some time now. Content and programming change as rapidly as devices and platforms emerge. Media is the new *frame* for all communications technology.

Hail to the chiefs

Fifteen years ago chief information officer was a new term on campus and in the workplace. Now it's joined in the lexicon and in the personnel ranks by chief knowledge officer, chief technology officer, chief learning officer. Surely there will be even more variants.

In the 1980s we were introduced to spreadsheets and business applications. In the 1990s digital gadgets led us to a growing array of more refined knowledge navigators and digital personal assistants. We are now in an era of proliferating audiovisual networked programming.

"Convergence is all about mixed media," says Dr. Casey Green, director

of the Campus Computing Project.

"Condensed content, multiple uses of content and cross platform compatibility are the themes in electronic publishing. As devices and programming converge, the IT function is rapidly changing," says Dr. Tayeb Kamali, vice chancellor, Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE.

Media studies include media psychology

Media studies is a *frame* for the overall big picture. It is a research area that has emerged in IT and computer academics, film, television and gaming studies, and in schools of psychology, communication and education. It includes an understanding of the devices that are in use; who is using them; how they are being used. Media Studies research is also about effectiveness—what works and what doesn't work.

Professional opportunity abounds for people with media skills in educational environments. BrainX is a new company that provides a good example. Bruce Lewolt, CEO of BrainX explains that BrainX software analyzes text, and from it, generates test questions, study guides, and a variety of useful instructional materials.

Dr. Michel Vannier, president of Eighteen Software, Inc. can demonstrate modeling and simulation programs that teach geology and geography audiovisually in a breathtaking way. HiTechHi L.A. is a wireless charter high school in Los Angeles experiencing remarkable performance by its students as a result of placing media-related technology at the forefront.

Media studies include *media psychology*. Why? It is no longer sufficient to combine money with technology and creativity to achieve a successful product. An understanding of human behavior is crucial as well. University courses in media psychology include topics like the physiology and psychology of learning, cognitive and sensory psychology, theories of trying, success, persuasion and attention.

Dr. Ronald Giannetti, dean of the School of Psychology at Fielding

Graduate University explains, "Technology is the syringe. Psychology is the serum."

Opportunities on and off campus

Media studies offerings at the graduate level will equip skilled practitioners to help satisfy the demand for similar skills in the corporate world, where workplace learning is growing apace. More than 2,000 corporate universities exist in the U.S. today, with another 1,000 worldwide.

The University of Pennsylvania School of Education and the Wharton School are working together to educate chief learning officers. Temple University has announced an Ed.D for corporate learning officers. Fielding Graduate University, where

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I ply my trade, has launched a media studies concentration in our School of Educational Leadership and Change, as well as a Ph.D offering in Media Psychology in our School of Psychology.

Interestingly, Fielding has eliminated its CIO position and included those responsibilities in the academic affairs office under an associate provost who is also chief learning officer. This move makes a statement about the future and is a beacon for those who welcome new opportunities. ■



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