

Innovation to Enhance Blended Learning Experience: Applying Google Sites in Higher Education

Budi Harsanto
University of Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia
budi.harsanto@fe.unpad.ac.id

Abstract: Internet has influences numerous aspects in our life, including our learning process. Interest in the internet as a media to enhance learning experience in education operations has increased over the last decade. The recent web era termed as web 2.0. In web 2.0 era, users have the convenience to design their own website without need of learning complicated programming language. Combination between offline and online learning is known as blended learning. Innovations related with blended learning are emerging. The purposes of this paper are to elaborate the features of Google Sites that are useful for blended learning and to share users experiences from utilize Google Sites as tools of blended learning program at Faculty of Economics and Business University of Padjadjaran (FEB Unpad), Bandung, Indonesia. Users are often inhibited in creating or maintaining a website because of the complexity challenge. Google Sites, known for its tag line “create, collect and control”, offers ease of use in this regard. Faculty member and student can use this tool to interact. Users experience survey was conducted involving 84 users (78 students and 6 faculty members) to elaborate response of users, both faculty members and students. Results suggest that highest agreement rate was attained that Google site is helpful in share information. The lowest agreement rate was found in “Google site useful for online discussion”.

Keywords: *Blended learning, innovation, operations, learning, process*

1. Introduction

Internet has changed many aspects of life nowadays. Internet stands for interconnection networking, which is a network that connects computers globally. At first, in 1957 this computer network was developed for the limited purposes of the military. The internet term was raised by the Arpanet (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) in 1974. Internet continues to grow until now. In 1995, Yahoo was established and Amazon sold books online for the first time. In 1997, Google search engine was launched. Then in 2004, Facebook was released. An important milestone occurred in 1989 when Tim Berners Lee proposed management informations system called the World Wide Web, to be used by researchers at CERN, Geneva. CERN is the European Organization for Nuclear Research. In that year, the first website in the world was born. The website address was <http://info.cern.ch/>. Tim’s idea was to ensure that information can be easily transferred using the internet. This idea could be realized and has continued to grow in the following years. Nowadays, thousands of websites are available in the virtual world with an estimated more than 2.1 billion internet users worldwide in 2011 (Gribin, 2011). Currently, internet use has been widespread in various field of life, from business to education. Web era has evolved from the beginning to the present. The first era of the web is called web 1.0 whereby the main function of web is to access information. People can access information easily, although the information was in place that are geographically far apart. Events in one place can be widely known even with slight time differences. This era really make great changes to the world. In web 1.0 users can access the information contained on the website. Relationship formed is one way. The typical website in this generation is read function. Typical website in this era is static whereby information retrieval functions is available without user interaction. The second web era is known as web 2.0. The typical website in this era is read and write. Relationship formed is two way. Technically, there are many differences between web 1.0 and web 2.0. The main difference is on the level of interaction. Web 2.0 is marked with greater interaction, enrichment relationship between people and information. In this web era, sharing takes place in mutual collaboration.

Furthermore, in web 2.0 era, users have the convenience to design their own website without need to learn a complicated programming language. In the education field, the advancement of the internet and web are very pronounced in learning process. Traditionally, learning can only takes place face to face, but