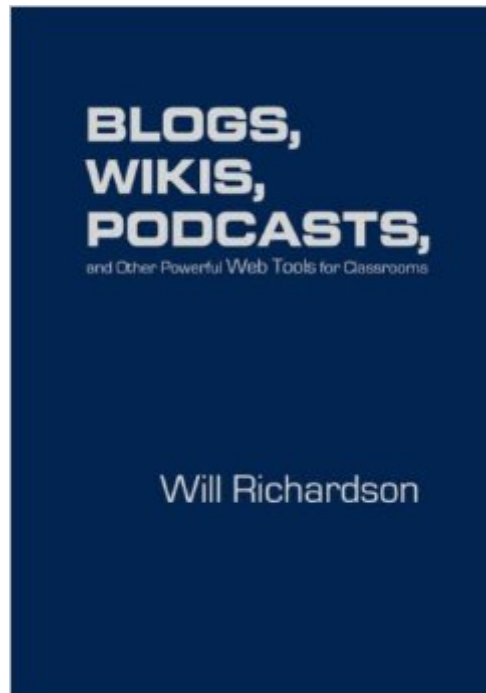# Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, And Other Powerful Web Tools For Classrooms

Synopsis

For both novice and experienced "techies," this practical resource shows how to use blogs and other new Web tools for innovative, interactive teaching and motivated learning.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Note: while there are some spoilers here, I will deliberately LEAVE THINGS OUT so you will have no choice to read his great book. I could not put it down and I learned so much, even though I've been Podcasting since September and Blogging (sort of) for two years.Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms by Will Richardson is a great resource for any teacher or instructional technologist who wants to integrate technology into the classroom. Will begins by quoting Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web - the vision was that it was a "read-write web" - with web users not only collecting information but creating it as well. In his book, Will gives many examples of how to do this:Blogs: great for class portals, an online filing cabinet, e-portfolios... but better: a collaborative space for students and teachers to react to questions and scenarios - all online where Will has arranged for his students to meet authors or students from other schools to discuss a topic. Student writing becomes authentic, relevant. Will recommends that teachers blog themselves before introducing blogs to their students (just like a teacher of writing should be a writer himself, or a reading teacher should read on her own). Will dedicates an entire chapter to "getting started" with blogs - with juicy tips and tricks, as well as resources for new bloggers.Wikis: after a discussion of the origin of the wiki (wiki-wiki - Hawaiian for "quick") and a discussion of the most

well-known wiki, Wikipedia, Will discusses the uses for wikis in school: you can create an online text for your classroom, a lesson plan exchange for teachers, and he gives a good introduction to creating your own wiki using PBWiki.

This book is a mixed bag. The entry blurb says it was published in 2006 but page 112 of this very very short book has the author telling us he expects podcasting to be big in 2005. just as blogs were big in 2004, the year he probably wrote this very very small book.The book is sometimes useful in giving out some urls so we can look at what others are doing or what is available out there. However, a common problem with all these entry level books is they lack focus and a targeted audience. Is the book for teachers from grade school up to university level? This is an important question as it would dictate what approach to take.For the hefty price of this book, I got to look at a few new sites. But that happens most days when someone puts me on to a new thread for free. Other than that, I got very little out of it beyond a broad brush approach of what the author is doing, which is relevant to him but not to me or you.I use Wordpress which gets only passing mention in this shallow book. I was considering buying the Wordpress Quickstart book which comes out at the end of June. But that version is already out of date and the Wordpress site has enough supporting documents to fill a small library. So why either the book when Google is better?And why buy another geewhizz book, which has one shallow chapter on Flickr (google it if you don't know what it is, visit the site, save a few photos and you have what is in the Flickr chapter).Most books like this agree books are going out of fashion. But they keep spewing out over priced books like this. Still the big font was easy on the eyes.Also, teachers have to generally work to a platform, a curriculum that has been externally set.

If you are looking to add technology into your classroom, Will Richardson's book, Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms, is a good place to start. The book takes the reader through a journey of possibilities to using web 2.0 tools in education. Each chapter was dedicated to a web 2.0 tool, from Weblogs to Social Networks (and many in-between)! Each chapter describes the web 2.0 tool and then gives examples of how others have used the tool in their classroom. On top of that Richardson also has examples you can actually go to on the Internet! I found that the real life examples reinforced the idea that teachers all over the world are incorporating technology into their classrooms. And it was nice to see how others were doing that.I like how Richardson wrote the book for educators and he understands that not everyone is an expert at using technology. He constantly is mentioning that before jumping into using this in the

classroom, you must first become involved yourself in the technology. Which is so true; you must first understand how to use technology and what this all means in the education world before expecting your students to. He provides guidelines and steps of how to incorporate web 2.0 tools into your classroom.From this book I have built upon what I already know about web 2.0 tools and learned some new things. In fact while reading this book, a colleague of mine should be how to use Jing and Screencast to record and share a video from my computer. When I went home to read the next chapter of Will's book I learned even more about Jing and Screencast and how other teachers were using it. There was however one chapter that was completely new to me which was chapter five RSS.

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