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Is Technology Good For Education? (Digital Futures)



Synopsis

Digital technologies are a key feature of contemporary education. Schools, colleges and universities operate along high-tech lines, while alternate forms of online education have emerged to challenge the dominance of traditional institutions. According to many experts, the rapid digitization of education over the past ten years has undoubtedly been a *“good thing”*. *Is Technology Good For Education?* offers a critical counterpoint to this received wisdom, challenging some of the central ways in which digital technology is presumed to be positively affecting education. Instead Neil Selwyn considers what is being lost as digital technologies become ever more integral to education provision and engagement. Crucially, he questions the values, agendas and interests that stand to gain most from the rise of digital education. This concise, up-to-the-minute analysis concludes by considering alternate approaches that might be capable of rescuing and perhaps revitalizing the ideals of public education, while not denying the possibilities of digital technology altogether.

Book Information

Series: Digital Futures

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Polity; 1 edition (May 23, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0745696473

ISBN-13: 978-0745696478

Product Dimensions: 4.9 x 0.6 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #448,490 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #263 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Computers & Technology](#) #637 in [Books > Textbooks > Education > Administration](#) #1058 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Education Theory > Administration](#)

Customer Reviews

“Digital Futures is an educational movement seeking to harness the expertise of the industry to train and employ the young innovators, makers and doers of tomorrow “ today.” That is the opening proclamation of what I suppose I can call their Mission Statement. Neil Selwyn is an Australian academic with a prolific output of writings on the subject of education vs digital

technology. What he has produced on this occasion is impressive in many ways, but not least in keeping his analysis of the intricate interactions of these topics clear to a reader without being patronising at the same time, and covering a wide gamut of arguments and reasoning within 160 pages of a main text. What Selwyn gives as his basic purpose is to shift the nature of the conversation. He is taking stock apparently, rather than trying to rock any boats or propose novelties, and I find that a fair description of what he has succeeded in doing, if only he had been less repetitious about the shortcomings of other discussions. These, after all, are explicitly ruled out of further discussion by himself, so just get on with that. One very important point is enunciated near the start, and it is that digital information and its capacity to broadcast teachings that were once jealously restricted within the four walls of this or that university or college is sounding the eventual death-knell of precisely these institutions. I could of course be mistaken, but I seemed to find very few if any occurrences of the word information, often inseparable from discussion of digital matters.

The author answers his titled question: yes/no/all points in between. In other words, there is no easy definitive answer. Rather, the author provides a template of answers that require the reader to think otherwise, than he or she is currently viewing the subject matter relating to the subject: ed tech. This book, he states/takes the hype of education and technology seriously. What I got from the reading of this book was that society desperately needs a world other than that of extremely concentrated global capital; we need one instead, of free access and control over knowledge, information, and communication - wresting control away from capital and into the hands of the people/not the current confederacy of dunces - the less than 1%. No more is this more paramount than in the education of our children, their children and their grandchildren. Currently those confederacy of dunces are harvesting the last pockets of wealth in our country in healthcare and education. They are wiping out what's left of the middle class. For example, the standardized tests are geared to the individual student; it is the SAT/ACT on steroids. Once the student picks an answer, the next question asked is based on the previous answer. This process expands exponentially, as more & more prompted questions are answered to harvest vast data on your children, as well as profiling their personalities. Presumably for sale to many and all vendors. The author points out that because educational futures are directing billions of dollars of investment we need to become involved in looking to develop more credible alternatives. The author also points out that people are now consuming media at an exponential growth due to mobile telephony, smartphones, tablets and other computerized devices.

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