E-Learning Nudism: Stripping Context from Content

Herbert Hrachovec

(Abstract)

Object oriented software development has inspired a similar approach to computer-assisted teaching. It is supposed to generate "learning objects", i.e. self-standing, modular units of instruction that can be freely exchanged between different digital environments and re-deployed under changing circumstances. "The fundamental requirement for modular architecture and the linkage system is the separation of content from the instructional use of the content." (Pithamber R. Polsani)

While a similar principle holds for traditional text books and course materials its application to globally networked teaching raises some unsettling questions. Globalization amounts to a massive downgrading of local context and offers the prospects of an unbounded, pervasive knowledge domain. Learning, however, if it is not restricted to professional training, consists in social processes, developing in multiple formats and channels of instruction and feed-back. Such events require a given location and a specific horizon of expectations. Learning objects may become the substitutes of text books, but this does not resolve the central challenge of education: mediating abstract knowledge and embodied, contingent patterns of expertise.

Literature:

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