

## **EmergingEdTech's 2013 Free Education Technology Resources eBook (Book Review)**

**Reynald Maravilla Cacho**  
**Philippine Normal University, Philippines**

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*114 pages*

This 2013 digital booklet edited and, in part, written by Kelly Walsh of the College of Westchester in White Plain, New York presents a compilation of 15 chapters, mostly contributed and/or originally published as blog posts by teachers, education bloggers (via guest posting) and technology enthusiasts on EmergingEDTech.com. This free eBook provides an overview and access links to many incredibly free and nonfree applications and resources on the internet for teachers and students to use inside and outside the classroom for teaching, management and productivity purposes.

Such an eBook can be stored in any computer, or mobile device that can read pdf files. Its 15 chapters deal with: (1) blogs and blogging resources; (2) cloud apps; (3) collaboration & brainstorming tools; (4) educational games and gamification; (5) educational videos, lectures, podcasts, and more; (6) flipped classroom resources; (7) iPads in education; (8) online interactive white boards; (9) massive open online courses; (10) picture and image editing application; (11) presentation and screencasting; (12) popular social networking applications and social learning; (13) teaching with cell phones & smartphones; (14) surveys and polls; (15) other topics and resources.

The material opens with an overview on creating a blog for educational purposes. This is followed by the introduction of Cloud apps noting that the *Internet is the Ultimate Cloud*. Approaches to making lesson plans accessible through Google Drive, Edmodo, and Dropbox to name a few are also provided. For making it more exciting, this eBook also shares useful tools for collaboration and brainstorming such as Bubble.us, Mindmeister.com and Mindmapper. This is, of course, by no means exhaustive. Interestingly, one can find sections promoting internet enabled game apps and free resources for iPads and other device that could lead to cognitive, social, and emotional learning for basic and higher education students. To respond to the multimodalities of learners, educational videos, lectures, podcasts, and trending *Flipped* classroom resources whether coming from Teachem.com or TED Ed Website, are briefly noted. As one would expect from its American context, the use of iPads in education is explicitly endorsed. A substantial number of pages feature the whys and hows of using iPod/iPad apps and resources for education, providing a wide array of useful links.

Several useful online interactive white boards are indicated in this eBook. The editor recommends free or with-fee tools that could meet users' requirements. Responding to the growing popularity of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) there are informative infographics and useful links. Apart from the educational resources, 5 free picture and imaging tools are suggested. In addition

a variety of presentation and screencasting tools for enhancing PowerPoint slides are highlighted from Glogster, Prezi to Voki. This eBook also promotes popular social networking and social learning apps; a wide collection of app combined with brief information and links is up for grabs for teachers interested in trying out the potentialities of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook in class. With mobile devices almost becoming ubiquitous, teaching with cell phones and smartphones will be a common scenario. Ways to embrace cell phones/smartphones in the classroom for iPhones apps or Androids are sketched through web or article links showcasing their use and other resources on how to get the most of them in school. Similarly, brief insights on the online tools for surveys and polls are offered. The last chapter features a wide variety of free miscellaneous resources focusing on computer literacy tools, search for grant links, and the potential usefulness of Second Life that according to the editor did not warrant a full chapter. Finally, a fitting conclusion for this eBook wraps up with a link listing unrestricted productivity tools for educators and general applications intended for everyone.

Given the ever-changing Web, one might have wished that the version reviewed had noted that Kathy Schrock's "iPads in the Classroom" (linked on p. 42) offers many tutorials, lists of apps and related materials.. Defunct links were found on pages 61 (5 Skills You Need to Succeed...); 64 (The Widening World of Massive Open Course); 65 (What's A MOOC); 83 (On Popular Networking Applications...); and page 102 (Understanding Text Message Shortcuts) . One hopes web-documents are regularly updated so that these sorts of problem can be addressed. Regular searches or an exploration of the Internet Archive might track down what is currently mis-located.

As far as choosing academic content is concerned, one might frown upon the citing of references directly from Wikipedia on page 60. It would have been more appropriate if the primary references about MOOCs were checked and adopted rather than simply linking it to Wikipedia entry. Useful websites that are not sustained come and go. Vuvox and the OneTrueMedia presentation tools suggested in Chapter 11 are no longer available. They might have been active in 2013 but are currently out of reach. As to providing other alternatives, it would have been useful if information were provided about another free presentation and screencasting tool, *Camtasia*, rather than providing just a link to an article at the end. Moreover, Google Drive with its online form tool (which is free) could also have been suggested in Chapter 14 rather than just presenting Doodle and Survey Monkey. Since this eBook builds on the American context, iPad/iPhone suggested apps and resources dominate over Android tools and research, cases cited as examples, and links belong mainly to the American educational setting. Nonetheless, much of what it offers may cut across cultures and boundaries.

There is much to be grateful for in this eBook. Other than that it comes for free, its pdf format provides a table of contents that is hyperlinked to the various chapters for easy navigation, the language in general is conversational and engaging, not to mention the appropriate iconic images which represent certain apps and tools are adopted. The author did a great job of compiling and editing most visited articles or sites featuring ICTs for education and personal use. Although it explicitly promotes EmergingEdTech.com, other relevant and accessible links to trusted sources are also suggested. I, for one, found interesting tools and resources that I have not known before such as the links for alternative interactive whiteboard and social learning sites, to name a few. If one is tired of reading such a considerable text, this pdf eBook can also be converted into audio text, or one could let Adobe Read-Out-Loud functionality do its thing

A strong point of this text is that it provides useful links to insightful articles, research, PowerPoint templates or instructional videos. Although most of the case studies cited are in an American context -- particularly on the benefits of gamification in education and social engagement to limiting attrition -- one European study noted (a report shared by Simon Thomas on the use of iPads in Longfield Academy in Kent, England, on page 43) argues for the value of the iPad as an educational tool. This eBook will also be useful for educators and, of course, researchers looking

for related literature. Every tool is a learning experience. It is a good thing that the author himself tried and tested most of the apps promoted in this eBook. His personalized inputs added flavor to the tools' acceptability and compatibility whether to try out the resources suggested or just apply what is applicable to one's needs and setting.

Information and Communication Technology for learning is almost everywhere and is evolving fast. This 2013 eBook provides a quick and handy guide for both beginning teachers looking for ICTs for teaching-learning processes, and experienced ones wanting to try free or non-free alternatives. Nevertheless, an updated edition is desirable to correct some inaccessible links and kinks, or a full eBook version that provides more substantial chapter contents devoid of minor inconsistencies and formatted in a modular style. Apart from the minor criticisms presented, this booklet offers materials that are beneficial for basic to higher education teachers and students alike. Overall, the major advantage of having this text on hand is that it suggests tools and resources for personal, instructional, academic and productivity purposes, and, most of all, it is free.

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