

Becoming Learner Centered

a journey through the classroom and the conference room

E-mail is for Old People

Posted on August 11, 2008 | 1 Comment

“E-mail is for old people.”



I heard that sentence spoken two times (in two separate workshops

by different presenters) at the [New Faculty Forum](#) at [Georgia Southern University](#) last week.

On the surface, that made sense to me, based on my experiences teaching “traditional college students” over the past year. Most of my students only check their e-mail a few times a week, but check Facebook or MySpace several times a day. I wondered why this was so. Last night, I read a [tweet](#) by [Beth Kanter](#) that led me to a great explanation of why Millennials prefer communicating through their social networks to using e-mail.

Beth provided a link to the blog post by [Alex Berger](#), titled “[Social Networks, E-mail and User Behavior](#).” Below are a few of the reasons, from Alex, that our current college students have gravitated away from e-mail:

- *By high school some of us were forced to register a new school e-mail address.*

to abandon one e-mail in favor of a freshly registered restart.

- *As the offerings evolved many of us also re-located from one provider to another – eg: from MSN to Google.*
- *By College we had our college e-mail and were forced to switch over, or balance several accounts simultaneously.*
- *As we began to search for internships and look for professional opportunities many of us then were forced to register new more professional e-mail addresses. Things like Alex.Berger@email.com to replace the old SunB4be1312@email.com.*
- *By graduation most of us then had to adopt new work e-mail addresses with our employers.*
- *Meanwhile our University e-mails eventually expired.*

That said, at [Georgia Southern University](#), e-mail is the official communication channel between the university and our students. So what I've been doing for the last semester or so is sending out "official" messages to my students at their Georgia Southern e-mail addresses. THEN, I immediately follow that up with a Facebook update or Facebook message letting them know to check their e-mail for a message from me. In most of my classes, there are several students who are my Facebook friends. They help spread the word to

their classmates.

What do you do to communicate electronically with your students? I'd like to know. Please share your comments.

And in the meantime, read [Alex's entire article](#). It's worth your time.

Photo Credit: "[Still in love? I think so ; \)](#)," originally uploaded to Flickr by [Henný G](#)

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ONE RESPONSE TO E-MAIL IS FOR OLD PEOPLE

[Alex Berger](#) | August 15, 2008 at 10:16 pm | [Reply](#)



Thanks for the mention and reference! It sounds like the hybrid facebook/e-mail process you've adopted will really be a huge asset for your students.

Another concept that merits exploring at some point – which i think your post hints at – is the subject of social nodes and how they are responsible for the distribution of information. That, especially in light of services like twitter and facebook might have some very interesting implications.