

The Next Decade of Online Learning in Higher Education: Blue Ocean Strategies for the Design and Delivery of Graduate IS Programs

Panel Presentation

Maxine S. Cohen

College of Engineering and Computing
Nova Southeastern University
cohenm@nova.edu

Martha M. Snyder

College of Engineering and Computing
Nova Southeastern University
smithmt@nova.edu

Jan vom Brocke

Universität Liechtenstein
Jan.vom.brocke@uni.li

Laurie P. Dringus

College of Engineering and Computing
Nova Southeastern University
laurie@nova.edu

Rhonda A. Syler

School of Accounting and
Information Systems
Louisiana Tech University
rasyler@latech.edu

Abstract

The market demand for online learning continues to increase and so do online enrollments in higher education. Online learning is gaining a strategic focus among academic leaders while at the same time we are seeing an emergence of new and innovative models of information systems (IS) graduate programs and instruction delivery methods. Given these trends, what does the future hold? What are our “blue oceans”? The objective is to engage in a conversation about how technology is changing teaching and learning in higher education and specifically, in the design and delivery of graduate degree programs in IS. An international panel with members representing academic administrators, faculty, and online learning researchers will share their perspectives about the progress and direction of online learning. The overarching questions are: How are online technologies transforming higher education for the better or worse? As IS educators, what are our blue oceans?

Keywords

Online learning, blended learning, IS graduate education, blue ocean strategy, technology trends.

Panel Overview and Objectives

Online learning is defined as: “a learner’s interaction with content and/or people via the Internet for the purpose of learning” (Means, Bakia, & Murphy, 2014, p. 6). Online and blended courses continue to gain popularity among higher education institutions. For example, academic leaders in the U.S. who consider online learning to be a strategic priority is at an all-time high of 70.8%, an increase from 40.8% in 2002 (Allen & Seaman, 2015). Means, Bakia, and Murphy (2014, p. 46) identified four major trends in how

higher education is using online learning including: 1) self-paced adaptive instruction and competency-based learning, 2) blended learning, 3) learning analytics, and 4) massive open online courses (MOOCs). At the same time, we are seeing an emergence of new and innovative models of IS graduate programs and instruction delivery methods such as competency-based, executive, and professional IS programs (Topi, Conboy, Donnellan, Ramesh, & Van Toorn, 2014). The objective of the panel is to engage in a conversation about how technology is changing teaching and learning in higher education and specifically, in the design and delivery of graduate degree programs in information systems (IS).

Panel Layout

Three panel members representing academic faculty, administrators, and researchers in North America and Europe will share their perspectives about the progress and direction of online learning. Two moderators will co-lead the discussion. The panel will be structured as follows:

After brief introductions, the moderators will present an overview of the current state of online learning in higher education including current trends and issues as well as the definition of *blue ocean* as it is used within the context of the panel discussion. Panel members will share examples of how they are using online learning and online technologies. Next, two overarching questions will be presented: 1) How are online technologies transforming higher education for better or for worse? and 2) What are our “blue oceans”? Each panel member will have the opportunity to address these two questions and present a brief position statement. Based on the diversity of the panel members and their extensive experiences with online learning and higher education, we expect a dynamic discussion. Following the position statements, input from the audience will be sought. The moderators will close the session with remarks that summarize the panel discussion. Participants should walk away with a better understanding of trends and issues, affordances and constraints, and blue ocean strategies related to online learning and the design and delivery of graduate IS programs.

Panel Participants

Jan vom Brocke, Ph.D. is AIS Vice President of Education 2013-2016. He is Professor of Information Systems, Hilti Chair of Business Process Management, and Head of the Information Systems Department at the University of Liechtenstein. Jan has published more than 300 papers in, among others, *Management Information Systems Quarterly* and *Journal of Management Information Systems* and he is author and editor of 23 books, including the *International Handbook on Business Process Management*. He is Co-Director of the Master of Science in Information Systems, Director of the PhD Program in Business Economics, and serves as an advisor on IS education to a wide range of institutions. He has taught at a number of universities, including the University of Muenster (Germany), the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland), the LUISS University in Rome (Italy), the University of Turku (Finland), the University College Dublin (Ireland), and he is an active supporter of the AAU IS PhD program at the University of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). In 2013 Jan was awarded the AIS Award for Innovation in Teaching.

Laurie P. Dringus, Ph.D., is Professor of Information Systems in the College of Engineering and Computing at Nova Southeastern University. Her research interests include human-computer interaction, information design, and online learning environments. She has published widely several articles and presentations related to the research, design, development, and evaluation of online learning environments. From 1998-2014, Laurie served as Editor-in-Chief of *The Internet and Higher Education*, a refereed international journal published quarterly by Elsevier.

Rhonda A. Syler, Ph.D. has been on the faculty in the department of Management & Information Systems at Louisiana Tech University since 2012. She serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Information Systems Education* and is on the Board of Directors for the Association of Information System Education Special Interest Group. She was the director of the MIS graduate programs when she was at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and has over 14 years of experience teaching and developing online courses. In addition to her current research activities in offshoring, systems development, problem solving pedagogy, and the interrelationships of organizations and information systems, Rhonda continues to travel internationally to examine global issues that impact information systems development. Her research accomplishments include a Best Paper of the Year Award with the

Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education, a Distinguished Research Award at Allied Academies, and an award recipient of an institution-level CIEE International Faculty Development Seminar Award for study in India.

Panel Moderators

Maxine S. Cohen, Ph.D., is a Professor in the College of Engineering and Computing at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). Her research interests focus on human-computer interaction. She has served as a collaborator with Ben Shneiderman and Catherine Plaisant on *Designing the User Interface*, 5th edition. Prior to joining NSU she worked at IBM and previous to that taught at Binghamton University, including being the Director of the undergraduate computer science program. Her Ph.D. and Masters degrees are from Binghamton University. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Vermont. She has presented and published at the ACM SIGCHI conference and IEEE Frontiers in Education.

Martha (Marti) M. Snyder, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the College of Engineering and Computing at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). Prior to joining NSU in 2006, she spent over 15 years as a senior instructional designer and project manager for a Fortune 500 company where she designed learning solutions for domestic and international banks, retailers, mortgage companies, and insurance agencies. Marti serves as a reviewer for various journals in technology and higher education and has published articles in national and international journals including *The International Journal of Designs for Learning*, *The Internet and Higher Education*, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *Journal of Instruction Delivery Systems*, and *The Qualitative Report*. Her research focuses on designs for technology-based learning environments. In 2015, she was awarded Best Research Presentation for the American Educational Research Association's Design and Technology SIG.

Equipment Requirements

Projector and laptop hookup. A PowerPoint presentation will support the panel discussion.

Acknowledgements

We thank the panel members, conference committee members, and volunteers for their hard work and effort in planning the 2015 AMCIS conference. We also thank Dr. James Parrish for his assistance with organizing the panel and Drs. Souren Paul, Suzanne Rivard, and Martin Santana for our early discussions.

References

- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. 2015. "Grade Level: Tracking Online Education in the United States," Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group, LLC. Retrieved from <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradelevel.pdf>
- Means, B., Bakia, M., & Murphy, R. 2014. *Learning Online: What Research Tells Us About Whether, When, and How*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Topi, H., Conboy, K., Donnellan, B., Ramesh, V., Van Toorn, C., and Wright, R.T. 2014. "Moving Toward the Next Generation of Graduate Degree Programs in Information Systems," *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, (34:35), pp. 693-710.