

"Stickiness": A new measure of students' attention to online learning activities

Ainslie Robinson

The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Australia
ainslie.robinson@nd.edu.au

David Cook

Ca Technologies, New York City, USA
david.cook@ca.com

Online content developers use the term “stickiness” to refer to the ability of their online service or game to attract and hold the attention of users and create a compelling and magnetic reason for them to return repeatedly (examples include virtual pets and social media). In business circles the same term connotes the level of consumer loyalty to a particular brand. In this paper, the authors extend the concept of “stickiness” not only to describe repeat return and commitment to the learning “product”, but also as a measure of the extent to which students are engaged in online learning opportunities. This presentation explores the efficacy of several approaches to the monitoring and measuring of online learning environments and proposes a framework for assessing the extent to which these environments are compelling, engaging, and “sticky”. In particular, the exploration so far has highlighted the difference between how lecturers have monitored the engagement of students in a face-to-face setting versus the online teaching environment. In the higher education environment where increasingly students are being asked to access learning in the online space, it is vital for teachers to be in a position to monitor and guide students in their engagement with online materials. The mere presence of learning materials online is not sufficient evidence of engagement. The approach presented here offers options for more accurate testing of specific attention to online materials allowing greater assurance around engagement with relevant and effective online learning activities.