

## Chapter 15

# The Open Innovation Paradigm: Can Digital Storytelling Generate Value for the Educational Field?

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this chapter is to shed light on an emerging educational and business paradigm, stemming from the digital revolution and the opportunities disclosed by Open Innovation. The central idea behind Open Innovation is that, in a world of widely distributed knowledge, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research but should instead buy or license processes or inventions from other actors. After pointing out the potential benefits of digital storytelling and of Web 2.0 and 3.0 for promoting pedagogical and organizational innovation, the authors present an application of the Open Innovation Paradigm in education: the Value Generating Framework. The chapter offers empirical evidence of the benefits through an in-depth analysis of the alliance between the Italian Zoo “Parco Natura Viva” and the Italian foundation “Radio Magica.” This knowledge-intensive, collaborative, value network paradigm is more successful than the previous firm-centric paradigm.*

### INTRODUCTION

The experience of learning is the opposite of fun for many children around the world, but new technologies and the so-called web 2.0/3.0 have turned learning into an imaginative, creative and pleasurable activity. Nowadays one has to take

into account that receivers tend to be more active and creative, thus the border between production and reception is blurred, leading to an overlapping between the roles of the producers and receivers. The emergence of technologies such as the internet and its interactivity are not unknown phenomena; and concepts like convergence and networks are

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the main players in the construction of a new communication paradigm in different industries. In the last decade there has been an impressive take off of social computing, from blogging to social networking and social tagging. Researchers have pointed out that digital technologies have transformed learning patterns, coping with the different learning styles of the younger generation made up of the digital natives (McLester, 2007). All these fast growing and fast evolving digital experiences have radically transformed the traditional approach, and have traced the route for a new communication paradigm in (media) education. Digital natives are continuously connected with their peers and “always on” (Olbinger & Olbinger, 2005; Pedrò, 2006), thus their learning styles are affected by ubiquity, accessibility and ease of use of resources.

Educational agencies are at the crossroads of a number of innovative trends characterized by the use of the internet in the classroom and at home. Tools such as e-books, e-learning software, e-libraries, and Wikipedia are dramatically changing the traditional approach. Studying the evolution of the child’s literacy in digital environment since the early ages is the core of a fast growing scientific literature. When adults adopt sound teaching methodologies, children can benefit from the availability of digital tools as they expand the opportunities for learning by visual, interactive, and narrative supports unforeseeable a few years ago.

The aim of this chapter is to shed a light on an emerging educational and business paradigm, stemming from the digital revolution and the opportunities disclosed by Open Innovation. The chapter is organized as follows. In the first session the authors present the Open Innovation paradigm that lies at the foundation of the emerging educational and business paradigm presented in the following sessions. The second session focuses on the evolution of media and media education, emphasizing the effects at educational level of the transition from traditional to social and semantic

media. Based on the identification of the four educational challenges, the third session shapes and describes the framework of intervention and analysis: the Value Generating Framework, that leverages the opportunities disclosed by the Open Innovation paradigm through a “wise” application of digital storytelling. The fourth session focuses on the alliance between the Zoo “Parco Natura Viva” and “Radio Magica”, a non profit organization devoted to children education. Finally, the last session discusses the benefits of the application of the Open Innovation paradigm both in profit and non-profit contexts, pointing out how the digital revolution can create avenues for new strategies and solutions in the formal and informal educational realms.

## **OPEN INNOVATION PARADIGM**

Nowadays a particular form of collaboration for innovation has rapidly taken off, named Open Innovation: it “is a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology” (Chesbrough, 2003). This scenario leads to collaborations sharing risk and reward. The boundaries between a firm and its environment have become more flexible thus innovations can easily transfer inward and outward. The rationale of Open Innovation is that, in a world of widely distributed knowledge, intellectual property must be managed openly to encourage synergies among firms. Firms typically protect through patents the output of innovation. However, empirical evidence shows that thousands of patents are stored and never transformed into products as firms have limited resources. Therefore, internal inventions not being used in a firm’s business should be taken outside the company (e.g. through licensing, joint ventures or spin-offs). In addition, as companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research, they should buy or license processes or inventions

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