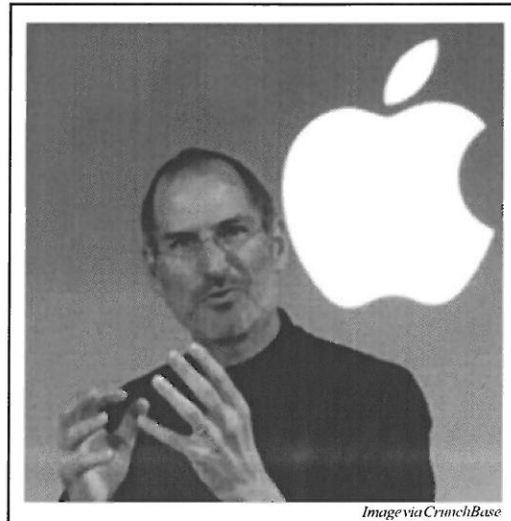


In Memoriam: Steve Jobs

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Previous journal issues have featured memorial columns for people who were instrumental in applied learning technology in general, and the Society for Applied Learning Technology (SALT[®]) in particular. On Wednesday night, October 5, 2011, the death of Steve Jobs was announced. Thousands of columns, editorials, blogs and magazine articles appeared so quickly, one might think the authors were prepared for the event. Although Jobs did not participate in any SALT initiatives, the roles that he played as technology's great inventor make him a candidate for recognition on these pages.

This editorial is based upon the words of others, who will be acknowledged as appropriate. Culling through the huge collection of electronic and print reports, we selected pieces for sharing written by Grossman and McCracken (2011), Prensky (2011), and Fowler and Vascellaro (2011). Great care has been taken to focus on Jobs' contributions, not his personality or personal life – two issues that have been written about prodigiously by others.

Through our dedication to post-secondary teaching and training, we found Prensky (2011) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to be extremely relevant. There have been many attempts to portray Jobs as an educator; he was not and never claimed to be one. The question Prensky addresses is: what is Job's legacy to higher education? Here are some of his remarks:...as a result

of Steve Jobs our environment has permanently changed. His genius in making devices that are beautiful, fun, useful, and that most of all, students and others wanted to have, essentially remade our institutions of higher learning.

Higher education will see the influence of Steve Jobs' products for years to come: tiny, elegant devices doing more and more; the opening up of individual innovation through apps; all of one's own—and the world's—texts, simulations, music, pictures, videos, and connections in one's pocket. But don't consider only the devices.

Another important lesson Jobs has taught students is that real innovation and change can come from multiple minds binding together around a strong leader and a worthy purpose.

He was also a master of strategy. Jobs was the first to realize that "seeding" his products into education—providing them to students at special prices—would reap enormous rewards later on in user loyalty. And because Jobs' products were so well-designed, it became cool, not geeky, for students to own and use them. That ownership created a bottom-up push for educational innovation that is still being felt.

The last paragraph moves us from higher education to business and to Fowler and Vascellaro (2011) in the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ). It never fails to amaze how the publication sees everything through the perspective of making money. The following remarks should make the reader feel

confident in the future of the company; do not see Job's death as the demise of Apple.

Since at least 2004, Mr. Jobs and Apple's board of directors have been putting into place a plan to maintain the legacy of his management style and his decision making, according to former Apple employees.

Among Mr. Jobs and the board's moves: slowing the flow of departing executives to build a bench of talent and installing programs ranging from annual retreats for the company's "top 100" managers to an in-house "university" that codified Mr. Job's work over the years into case studies.

By the time Mr. Job's died on Wednesday, much of the infrastructure and institutional knowledge was in place for Apple to continue on – despite fears that a company that depended so acutely on its co-founder's vision and personality would immediately fail without him.

The last selection, from Grossman and McCracken (2011) in *Time*, pays tribute to Jobs, the super-person. This piece is in line with the fact that Jobs has appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine eight times.

Steve Jobs remade the world as completely as any single human being ever has. The genius of Jobs, and the paradox, is that while Jobs understood us completely, he wasn't like us. He was better.

Human minds dull. His didn't. It's a rule of thumb in the world of technology that you get to revolutionize one industry at most, but Jobs did it every few years with stunning regularity; computers, movies, music, phones.

Jobs did not invent things, but he recognized their power before anyone else did. As important as the iPod was, it was ultimately just a high-tech Walkman. The iPhone, unveiled at a Macworld Expo keynote in 2007, was something far more: a powerful personal computer that happened to fit in your pocket. In 2010, Apple followed up the iPhone with the iPad, its first effort in a category, tablet computers, that had existed for two decades without a single hit product. He didn't invent it, but he reinvented it.

[From remarks made by Jobs at a commencement speech in Stanford in 2005:] "...most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

[And in conclusion] ...he had built some of the greatest tools for creativity and self-expression that humanity has ever seen.

In sum, Steve Jobs was a man for all seasons. He looked at what others had done, figured out how to improve on the model or product and reinvented it to perfection. He planned ahead so that his company could continue on in his spirit without him. He sold us the tools we need to do our jobs better. Our challenge, in applied learning technology, is to create, test and implement uses for these technology tools to improve teaching, training, learning and performance.

References

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