

From Passive to Proactive Learning: How We-Media and Self-Media are Revolutionising Informal Learning

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Abstract:

The evolution of digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Xiaohongshu, and independent podcasts has given rise to what is known as we-media and self-media—tools that can potentially reshape the landscape of informal learning. These platforms enable anyone with a smartphone to become both a content creator and a learner, fostering a dynamic environment for personalised, self-guided learning.

Unlike traditional social media, we-media promotes more specialised and interest-driven content, empowering users to explore topics through formats like short video tutorials, expert commentaries, and community-driven micro-courses. As a result, learning is no longer confined by geography or formal institutions.

This paper explores the transformative potential of we-media in informal learning through:

- The creation of customised learning journeys via user-generated content;
- The dismantling of access barriers to knowledge from around the world;
- The rise of participatory learning, where users contribute to and shape the knowledge ecosystem.

However, the decentralised nature of self-media also brings challenges, including content saturation, biased algorithms, and concerns over reliability. The ability to navigate these platforms effectively requires critical digital literacy and an awareness of content quality.

Drawing on over 18 years of experience in e-learning at the Singapore University of Social Sciences, the speaker will present:

- Emerging patterns and key developments in the use of we-media for learning;
- Methods for discerning credible content among a sea of user-generated media;
- Insights into the future of informal education in an age where every individual has the tools to become a broadcaster of knowledge.

Keywords:

Informal Learning, Self-Media, We-Media, Digital Literacy, Personalised Learning.