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## Letter from the Editor

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Fall 2015 Issue

## Letter from the Editor

Dr. Melissa Layne, Ed.D.

Without a doubt, this fall has been one of the busiest, as we continue to see our *Internet Learning Journal* readership and author submissions grow. These increasing numbers are a testament to our excellent marketing team, promotional efforts at conferences, invited webinars, workshops, and meetings with other university leaders outside of APUS. It's been an absolute pleasure talking to people inside and outside of academe and sharing the evolution of our journal—from our humble beginnings of a print and web-based publication to a multi-platform and interactive scholarly publication. That said, the impetus behind this transformation has not been openly shared...until now.

On my way back from a recent trip to South Africa (and consequently having several hours of flight time), I picked up the airline-hosted magazine, *Sawubona*--which in the Zulu language translates to “Hello” or “Good day.” I always like flipping through this particular magazine during my trips over because it is a wonderful collection of articles on just about everything---food and wine, business, sports, lifestyle, leisure, art, fashion--and of course my favorite topic...technology. So on this flight, instead of opening up to the beginning, I cheated and went straight to the technology section article entitled “*Generation Z: the digital game-changers*” and knew right away I was in for a treat.

Although I was already somewhat familiar with the newest kids on the block (dubbed Gen Z-ers), the author of this article describes them in candid detail. They bear no resemblance to the Millennial generation, nor are they like any other generation that begat them. Here are just a few of Dion Chang's (author)

observations on Gen Z-ers. They

- range in age from 13-17
- are online researchers
- are extremely creative
- are realists
- live in a world of cyberspace and their toys are videos and mobile platforms
- are adaptive
- are visual communicators (emoticons and emojis)

Toward the end of the article, he summarizes their world as one of “start-up entrepreneurship, new apps (daily), customization, on-demand everything and making their own pocket money from YouTube.” I was so fascinated by this article, I believe I've read it at least 5 or 6 times thus far.

What makes this short piece so fascinating is that *we* (collectively as academics and researchers) have this information at our fingertips, yet the ways in which online teaching and learning is currently being delivered at most educational institutions is a far cry from what this up-and-coming demographic will expect in terms of content delivery. Many of us have missed the mark by only focusing on what current tech gadgets or apps they are using, but have not stopped to consider Gen Zs' *other* diverse characteristics, nor are we asking probing questions as to *why* they use Snapchat and Instagram over Facebook, for example. Believe it or not, they view failure as a badge of honor; an opportunity to grow and improve--and to be quite blunt, we should be doing the same. Are we ready for this pragmatism? Some of us will be ready, but the reality is that many of us will not.

Well, I have to say that much of our inspiration for heading down this unpaved road with the *Internet Learning Journal* comes from the Generation Z-ers. Although I was born a few generations before Gen Z, I admire many of their intriguing attributes and downright "take no prisoners" attitude, hence my fervor behind changing the journal into something interactive and engaging for our readers. We have been determined to "talk the talk" and "walk the walk" by refusing to publish scholarly work using age-old processes only to produce something that is dense, and boring to read. We want to our readers to have an *experience* after engaging with the rich "stories" that our scholars have worked so diligently to publish. On that note, I'm very excited to present the work of our authors in this issue who share the same passion for curiosity and creativity. If you haven't already perused our interactive versions of the journal, I encourage you to do so by going to the *App Store* on Apple tablets and phones, or *Google Play* on Android tablets and phones, search for the free app *Internet Learning Journal*, and download.

On behalf of all of us at *Internet Learning Journal*, we would like to thank you, our readers, for your continued support.

*Happy Holidays!*



Dr. Melissa Layne  
Editor-in-Chief for *Internet Learning Journal*

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