# Visitor & Resident Part 1

Young people. They're good with using digital technology, aren't they? it's easy for them because they grew up with it!

Going online using the web it comes naturally to them. They learn how to use technology the same way they learn their own language by being immersed in it from a very early age.

It's this metaphor of language which underlies the digital natives and immigrants idea put forward by Marc Prensky at around about the turn of the century theory goes that if you're young enough to have grown up with digital technology then your native to it; if you're that little bit older and didn't grow up with access to the web, for example, the way you use it will be like attempting to speak a second language. It won't be innate in this way. You're an immigrant in the online world and you will never gain the natural fluency with the web that those who grew up with it have.

This notion was and still is very attractive but over time, it's become casually simplified into old people just don't get this stuff. The idea that past a certain age there's very little chance of you elegantly adapting to the digital environment leaving behind a generation fossilized in their pre digital habits.

The digital natives and immigrants idea also encourage the attitude that we didn't need to teach younger generations how to use technology the expectation was that they were going to teach us but being socially adept at Facebook or owning the latest phone for example is not a foundation for using the web effectively for study for critically evaluating a range of digital resources or even having the capability to formulate and express cogent arguments online these are examples of learning literacies which don't come for free with the latest technology literacies which are all the more crucial as learning continues to move online and beyond institutional boundaries in.

Recent years even Prensky himself has grown weary of the digital natives and immigrants idea as it's become ever more clear that age is not the predominant factor in the successful engagement with digital technology in the web now.

I propose an alternative model to understand our relationship with the web; one that's not based on age or technical skill but on our motivation to engage.

Visitors and residents: it's a simple continuum of modes of engagement and we can use it to map our use of services and platforms online; and importantly how and why we use those platforms using visitors and residents as a lens can help reveal underlying approaches and attitudes, which in turn can help us to support and engage the people we work with.

As I mentioned this is a continuum. Not too hard edge categories. We're not trying to type people into two groups. In actual fact most of us will use a combination of visitor modes and resident modes when we go online, depending on the context we're in.

At the visitor end of the continuum we tend to think of the web as being like a collection of tools. Things that are useful for getting a particular job done. So in visitor mode we decide what we're trying to achieve, rummage around in the untidy toolbox of the web, select a tool we think is going to work for us, use that tool, and then put it back and close the lid.

A good example of this would be going online to search for a piece of information using that information and then coming back offline again or perhaps using the web to pay some bills or book a holiday. Those kinds of activities. The point is that in visitor mode we leave behind no social trace of ourselves online at the resident end of the continuum.

We think of the web as a series of spaces or places when we're in resident mode with choosing to go online to be present with other people. We're living out a portion of our lives online. This mode of engagement does leave a social trace, one which remains after we go offline. People who regularly operate in resident mode are very likely to have a profile on a social networking site of some sort. They might be happy to express their opinion by commenting on other people's blog posts or videos. For example they might even have their own blog or be happy to post photos and videos that they've created themselves.

The extreme end of residency in the continuum involves highly visible activity online and is relatively rare more common is activity towards the centre of the continuum where we're active within known communities online. For example regularly contributing to an email list or posting to friends and family and Facebook. The point is that these types of activity are linked to our identity, our persona. We are residing as individuals online. As I mentioned earlier, context is very influential on our modes of engagement online so what we can do is add a vertical axis to represent this it's important to separate the personal from the institutional or professional but here again dealing not with opposing forces but with a sliding scale the resident web will tend to blur traditional boundaries between socializing work and study unless we actively compartmentalize our online lives even so the ways we choose to engage with the web in a personal context the practices we develop here do not necessarily translate smoothly into more formal context such as education in this short series we'll be exploring resident forms of practice not because resident modes are necessarily any better than visitor modes but because they're less widely understood.

Resident forms of practice give us a whole range of new ways that we could potentially engage a star for our students or our users online they have implications for our professional identities for how we produce and consume knowledge and for how we go about assessing the credibility of individuals information and institutions

# Visitor & Residents How to Map

Now I'm not going to go through the visitor and residence principle in detail because there's plenty of information about that elsewhere but just quickly to say that these are not types of people and this is a continuum. These are not two boxes. So if I come to the web with a kind of visitor mindset then I probably already decided what I want to do I go online I find what I need I do what I need to do and then I log off.

Okay so I really see the web as a series of tools or a pool of information and I don't leave any trace behind certainly no social trace.

Whereas if I come to the web in a resident mode then I'm going to be living out a portion of my life online okay I'm going to see the web as a series of spaces. Spaces or places where other people are, so I'm going to go online to express my opinion to work through elements of my identity or my persona online. So as you can imagine social media is where a lot of that takes place. If I am posting to Facebook. If I was commenting on a blog post or if I was blogging myself that would be more resident. It's much more visible and when I log off I'm liable to leave some kind of a trace. That's the continuum. Now what we can do with the continuum is we can add a vertical axis okay and in this case I'm going to write personal and institutional so that gives us a grid

here that we can work with and we can plot how we engage with the web across these different quadrants so for me this is this is a simplified version of my engagement my personal engagement map so we can start over here if I put a block down here then this is email for me for example so the reason that that's down there is because it's not a particularly visible activity I usually emailing a small number of people I know who they are I'm not really performing in the

same way that I would be I was posting to a wall in Facebook or

if I was tweeting for example and it's

very institutional this is my

institutional email and referring to now

when we've done the mapping process

before some people have actually got two

blocks for email they've got their

institutional email and they've got

their personal email that they probably

put up in this quadrant somewhere over

here and it's it's interesting to think

about the fact that what you've got

there is exactly the same technology but

split by roles so they've

compartmentalized their institutional

email and their personal email which

many of us do now having said that this

is very visit ory email in in my mode of

using it in actual fact for many of the

people that I work with here in the

department it's the place where I'm most

resident so perhaps you could argue that

it should go this way a little bit but

it's never going to be particularly

visible and you know there are other

technologies where I'm probably

institutional and bit more resident like

Skype for example when I'm collaborating

with people who are outside of the

department so let's go to the other end

of the spectrum then and the the

technology or the platform or the place

if you like that I'm most resident in

that you will be you know if you if you

want to find me online then this is the

place to come looking for me is Twitter

and that maps to around about here now

that the actual size and the shape of

these blocks and exactly where you put

them aren't too important in this case

my Twitter profile if you like it

started off being quite personal when I

got the account which was quite a few

years ago now and then as more people

have followed me so members of staff in

the department here or people that I

collaborate with around the UK and

around the world has become increasingly

more institutional and more professional

in some way so it's a bit of a mix but

it's gradually expanded down to be more

institutional but that is where I reside

online the most now another thing where

I am really quite present if you like

online as it there's a person is in the

blog

which is an institutional block so it's

a group vlog which is part of technology

assisted lifelong learning different

people contribute to it so it's it's not

my own blog and it's it's it's

institutional in that sense and I only

have a actually blog about things that

are to do with education and technology

occasionally it gets slightly

philosophical those are the longer posts

and probably not the best posts if I'm

honest but it's very much about me about

my opinion I'm putting the posts out

there so people will comment so that

there'll be some form of discussion so

that's why I plot it down here has been

really quite highly resident even though

perhaps blogs aren't the most social of

social media I still think that they can

be very resonant depending on how you go

about things so let's get the blue pen

back again talking of social media

actually one of the intriguing things

from the point of view of my map and

from this mapping process overall is

that my Facebook account would be up

over here and the reason for that is

because I'm only really friends with my

friends

interesting semantics here and with my

family but I don't really use Facebook

actively I just use it like a kind of

fancy address book and when we've run

this mapping process before we found

people plot Facebook all over this

quadrant in different places depending

on how they use it because the

technology itself especially if it's

something quite intricate like Facebook

doesn't mandate the mode of engagement

so in my case I'm using in a very

visitor fashion some people will use it

like an address book but then also

privately so they'll I am their instant

message just one or two other people or

messaged a little bit like Facebook

email each other so they're not visible

even though they're being social in

social media which would put their

Facebook somewhere around here whereas

other people are posting pictures of

themselves pictures of their friends

posting all over the wall all the time

so they're highly resident in Facebook

now my point is you can't just our

students what technologies they use

because that won't necessarily be

indicative of their mode of engagement

which is the more important factor if

you're looking for ways to engage with

them in your practice or with the

services that you provide

so what else have I got I think that the

last thing that I'm going to plot on

here that is of interest goes right in

the middle and that in my case is Google

Docs so I only have one Google account I

don't have two Google accounts and or

three or four as some people seem to be

able to manage and what that means is

that if you go to my Google Docs some of

those files some of those documents are

personal and some of them are

institutional and so for me Google Docs

has converged in the centre of this map

for a lot of other people that have done

the mapping process it's Facebook that's

converged and I think that's quite

interesting because what's happening is

the technology is causing this this

context collapse if you like and what

originally or traditionally would have

been two separate compartments the

institutional and the personal they'd

have been perhaps more neatly separated

through the use of because of the

ubiquity of the web and certain services

they are beginning to collapse together

and end up in the middle of the map so

as I say for a lot of people its

Facebook where they've got a profile

that they started socially and then

perhaps students start to friend them

other staff members start to friend them

or they start to friend them and then

you get to the point whereby when you

log on to Facebook you don't know

whether you're going to be dealing with

something that's to do with work or

something that's personal or sometimes

it's quite difficult to identify the

line between those two things it becomes

very blurry so we call that D

compartmentalization

now the last thing that I'm going to put

on the map actually which is something

that's very easy to forget I almost

forgot it myself but it's huge it's so

huge we almost overlooked it is a

massive block here for me and for most

people which is searching

now it has a say it's so common

sometimes we we almost pass it by you

could say that was googling for a lot of

students depending on on where they are

in their educational career this is

going to Google putting in a search term

and then taking a look at Wikipedia or

one of the top three links certainly

something off the first page of search

results and I think this is typical

really you know this goes all the way

across my personal and my institutional

I use it in both contexts now what we

find out of the JISC research is that a

lot of students are a little bit nervous

about perhaps talking about this

activity and they're certainly nervous

about citing some of the non-traditional

sources that they find as a result of

this activity especially Wikipedia and

that's because the institution that

there are either directly or implicitly

has has sort of said that it's not

legitimate it's not quite legitimate

activity it's not quite a legitimate

sort of strategy for learning and so

what happens is because this is so

convenient and so efficient which is why

everybody does it they carry on doing it

but they don't talk about it and this

creates what I slightly emotive Lee call

learning the learning black market

whereby we have a massive amount of

activity in this space but it's not

properly represented within an

institutional context because students

would rather keep quiet about it and I

think it's something that it would be

useful to kind of open up whether that's

through conversation or facilitating

students in their sort of literacies in

this area I think this is a really

important area so there's a couple of interesting things that have come out of there in terms of deep compartmentalization in terms of the learning black market and it and the sense that perhaps you can use the same technologies with different modes of engagement and that's why this process is important

# Visitor & Resident Part 2: Credibility

Until very late in the last century, for most people their primary source of information on any subject will be sitting on a short stretch of shelving in a library carefully curated resources given legitimacy by being selected to take up precious physical space next to their duodecimal counterparts most of these resources would have been written by experts and painstakingly quality controlled via a rigorous publishing method obviously it's expensive and time-consuming to produce knowledge in this form so it makes sense to ensure that your authors have a good grasp of their subject area and that only the most pertinent information ends up in the library in contrast to this the web is an inexpensive and agile way to reach a potentially vast audience you don't need to be an institutionally verified expert to express an opinion or to review a series of facts if your material is ranked highly in search results you will be read by many in the online environment where curation is by algorithm not librarian convenience and relevance often outstrip traditional notions of credibility and authority the web brings into question what it means for a source of information to be legitimate and it highlights the trust we place in the form and provenance of those sources for example the philosopher John Locke wrote the only fence against the world is a thorough knowledge of it but let's imagine that instead of producing this book Locke had tweeted his thoughts and then gone on to explain them in a blog post what his ideas have the same value the same resonance if they were online and not in this volume in front of me we

can think of the tension between

traditional forms of knowledge and the

web as being a bit like two forms of

currency the first is the

well-established reliable currency of

known institutions universities

publishing houses for example and the

known experts who are validated by those

institutions this is a stable currency

that has been around for hundreds of

years the second form of currency is the

new Pretender it's still emerging and

its value is very difficult to assess

its search rankings likes followers

views comments is blogs Wikipedia

Twitter Facebook its value changes

radically depending on the context it's

used in now this form of currency tends

to be traded at the rezident end of the

visitor and residence continuum and is

predominantly produced and promoted by

individuals rather than institutions now

the exchange rate from our

well-established currency now onto the

web is very good books journals videos

of lectures academic media personas they

all tend to retain their value when

converted to the digital and put out

online the exchange rate in the other

direction though is very poor but this

is slowly shifting as institutions come

to want more visibility and reputation

online will there come a time when

having thousands and thousands of

Twitter followers for example will be

part of what it takes to move up the

career ladder or when citing a blog post

is as respectable as

a journal paper

when we ask students and staff why they

choose to use the web over and above

other options convenience is always the

top reason given this often outstrips

the desire for accuracy Authority and

legitimacy we want fast results and the

web usually gives us good enough usable

answers so for example some teaching

staff may openly frown on the use of

Wikipedia but its sheer convenience

means that while it won't be discussed

or cited openly by learners it will

inevitably be used this generates a kind

of learning black market in which the

scale of the use of non-traditional

online sources is hidden what's created

when this happens is a tension between

the day-to-day learning practices of

students using the web and the

requirements of formal academia now this

in principle is not new but the web

amplifies the situation forcing students

to spend more time negotiating the

distance between how they actually learn

and what they perceive to be legitimate

learning practices from an institutional

perspective

have we created the learning black

market by challenging on critical

approaches to information seeking or by

holding on to traditional forms of

Education to tightly some learners hope

that search engines will improve to the

point that they won't need to critically

evaluate results working on a think less

find more basis is one of the promises

of online searching the idea that as we

offer more of ourselves to the web it

will be able to provide us with ever

more tailored responses to our questions

we'll never get a wrong answer even if

we struggle to frame the question this

perhaps cuts across our expectations of

what it means to study and what it means

to share information certainly if we

don't take this into account and the gap

will simply widened between current

learning practices and the requirements

of academia

discussions around the legitimacy of

information online could lead us into

/

thinking of the web as only being like a

kind of chaotic library in fact it's the

creation and sharing of material that

defines the resident end of the

continuum of course historically

students wouldn't have been expected to

produce publishable work until they

undertook their PhD work that was good

enough to go out into the world or end

up on the shelves of a library like this

one now with the web they've got the

opportunity to express opinions and to

develop a professional persona openly as

soon as they feel confident enough to do

so staff to have the opportunity to move

their professional practice online to

become more resident it's relatively

easy to set up a Twitter account or a

blog for example without having to jump

through lots of bureaucratic hoops you

could build up a following online and

become influential without first having

to climb the career ladder to a senior

institutional position and in some ways

the web's actually disintermediating the

institution by providing a shortcut for

staff to communicate directly with

potentially large audiences but who are

these audiences who should they be do we

consider it our job to only communicate

with those that have paid to engage

directly with our institution or should

we be using the web to communicate with

a much wider network of learners

is it a valid use of my time to build up

a professional network online is it

legitimate for me to discuss my thoughts

my ideas about working blog posts should

I be spending time editing and improving

Wikipedia pages and more importantly

what kind of recognition will I get for

my efforts how does any of this help me

is our responsibility only towards those

who are privileged enough to be part of

the system or is it also towards those

who are looking in or simply passing by

before we get carried away is worth

remembering that most incoming students

have a very traditional view of

Education just them some books and

possibly the chance to connect with an

expert at least that's what they tell us

when we ask them what they think

University will be like of course most

students learning practices are far more

complex than this but when we talk to

them they tend to implicitly make a

distinction between the processes of

formal education essays lectures labs

exams and the practice of learning which

is a far broader category the point is

that even if we're keen on more open

resident forms of practice even if we

believe that students should be able to

use and include all of the resources

available to and develop a voice online

they themselves are likely to be wary of

this approach or at least wary of

discussing it it's not uncommon for

students visitor and residence maps to

have very little activity in this

resident institutional quadrant here

with the majority of their personal

activity being up in this quadrant here

and the majority of their educational

related activity being down here in this

quadrant this tends to be because

educational institutions are as you

might expect geared around visitor modes

of engagement now expecting individuals

to automatically transition their

resident practice from personal to more

institutional context is a dangerous

assumption to make these kind of

transitions institutions can perhaps

encourage or facilitate but they

probably can't own taking a more

resident approach to education is more

than just a question of technology it

confronts underlying conception

what it means to learn and what it means

# Visitor & Resident Part 3: Open Practice

For most of us the web flows in a single direction a river of information and content we use for study work and entertainment those of us who have profiles in social media platforms might post status updates make comments upload photos but even so we'll spend most of our time consuming as visitors rather than producing the material yet a fundamental and powerful aspect of the web is the capability it gives us to share our thoughts and create networks and communities so what are the implications then for learners and for the educational establishment when everyone has the opportunity to publish in higher education we build on the

foundation of school in the hope that

when students leave their studies

they'll have the makings of a legitimate

voice in their chosen field the ability

to express opinions and become an

authentic practitioner the web can play

an important role here is a place where

we can reside as professionals and

encourage students to develop an

experiment with their subject related

personas it's a long way from the safety

of the classroom to the open territory

of the web learning whether it's in

physical or digital spaces is a risky

business and can make us feel vulnerable

we can't simply throw our practice out

online and expect everyone to start

sharing creating and collaborating

even if learners feel comfortable being

visible online in personal context this

doesn't necessarily mean they'll be

happy to reveal the thinking behind

their intellectual endeavors especially

if this might open them up to criticism

or reveal mistakes and failings really

this guy again

what we have when we publish in a

traditional sense is a finite audience

and one which is usually a safe distance

when we publish online you have a

potentially unlimited audience and one

which has the opportunity to talk back

if we see the web as a place for

completed thoughts a place for posting

finished work then we might have a

problem with this if we see it's a place

for discourse for moving ideas for words

then we might fare better but this cuts

against the standard notion of handing

in the polished essay or report for

assessment now in theory this way of

thinking is already central to higher

education but in practice it can fail

counterculture so for example setting

the task of editing or creating a

Wikipedia page instead of writing an

essay is likely to be more than just a

move from paper to the digital or asking

a cohort to post in blogs in comment as

a collaborative activity instead of

writing reports it's probably going to

involve a pedagogical shift and not just

a move to the web it's these kinds of

open practice that are likely to

challenge both learners and teachers

perception of the nature of Education as

a process ultimately the power of open

practice is an understanding the value

of audience and the potential for

discourse within networks and

communities dog food is as you'd expect

so any way to cut a long story short

the I believe that making the process of

learning more visible and collaborative

online challenges students to become

relevant members of their disciplines or

academic community but I'm not

suggesting that all types of learning

will find value in this approach

academics stage and subject area will

have a bearing on the potential to

engage users in resident style behavior

in an institutional context making early

stage work visible weathers a recognized

correct answer is unlikely to increase

understanding it could do more harm than

good

even so students are likely to be

comfortable discussing this kind of work

and other forms of learning in private

groups online but probably not in

platforms provided by their institution

as there's always the risk that

discussions are being monitored this

sense of being monitored is one of many

concerns around new forms of practice

online concerns that include suspicions

of both the web's ephemeral nature and

its permanence the value of the web that

the resident end of the continuum is

heavily influenced by the flow of time

content information it all has an

integral half-life which differs

depending on its genre so for example a

tweet might have a half-life of only a

few minutes whereas a blog post is

liable to remain current for far longer

of course mechanisms such as linking

liking retweeting and commenting can

reset the half-life of these modes of

communication but there's still a sense

that they're being drawn away from us

overt art is this inexorable flow of the

web which is often used to critique it

as a place for scholarly information

Wikipedia for example is treated with

suspicion because it can be changed

without

despite his revision histories is part

of the temporal flow of the web and not

fixed into permanent additions in the

same way as traditional publishing this

simply doesn't fit neatly with the

manner in which knowledge is produced

and exchanged by universities and other

educational institutions and yet

concurrently with our suspicions about

the ephemeral we're also concerned about

the permanence of the web we know that

it's possible to seek out information

that has long since sailed out of view

that blog post I wrote in that

tweet from if I have a mind to I

can reach down the river and bring it

back again whenever I want but what if I

change my mind about an issue that I

blogged about or if a tweet that I sent

in a personal capacity is later deemed

to be inappropriate in a professional

context these are real concerns

especially if your main resident persona

online is an indistinct mix of personal

and professional the untidy nature of

the resident web where boundaries are

blurred is an inevitable consequence of

individuals expressing opinions and

publishing work in a communal manner to

swim against the flow and take advantage

of the web as more than a tide of

incoming information we need to manage

the risks involved in being visible

online and accept the fluid character of

ever-changing interconnectivity

educational institutions have a

responsibility to facilitate emerging

student and staff practice online to

provide safe spaces without attempting

to own all learning related activity the

potential then of the resident end of

the visitor and residence continuum is

of the web as a space or a place where

we can be Co present and enact our

learning and involve our practice not

unlike the physical spaces we inhabit

the resident web involves identity

reputation and credibility and it's

increasingly relevant as a place where we work live and learn.