Organizing your Digital Self: Where to start?

The role of the instructor is changing – no longer the guardians of information, we are quickly becoming the facilitators of learning – however that learning takes place. The classroom is not our only stage these days, and to meet learning needs, we communicate by email, manage online homework, build websites and courses in learning management systems. However, all this "going digital" can be a bit overwhelming. How do you keep track of your links, files, blogs, email, and website materials? How do you go about organizing and sifting through the vast array of resources on the Internet and turning them into an easy-to-use and coherent set of learning materials for the classroom or online environment? How do you start from scratch and build a new course? Let me share some of my strategies for coping with the information overload and the new digital era.

Map of Resources (`http://tinyurl.com/9kd35u`)

- **If you do nothing else … do this!**
    o   Update all the Internet plug-ins on your computer so that you have a good experience (Flash, Java, Firefox, Adobe Acrobat...)
    o   Create a shell for each class you teach – organize by unit, section, and learning objectives
    o   Create an account to manage bookmarks from the cloud instead of from your desktop (Google Bookmarks, Diigo, or Del.icio.us)
    o   Get control of your email (watch Zero Inbox)
    o   Keep an up-to-date website at your campus (CV items, contact info, course info)

- **To catch up … do this!**
    o   Set up an RSS reader and load it with some blogs and newspaper feeds
    o   Join a social networking site (Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn) to see what it's all about
    o   Learn how to use Jing
    o   Send a Doodle to schedule a meeting (www.doodle.com)
    o   Build a personal website (Google Sites is pretty easy)
    o   Begin using an online calendar
    o   Learn how to use cloud computing sites (Google Apps are an example)
    o   Read about GTD (getting things done)

- **To take off full speed ahead … do this!**
    o   Start a blog or begin twittering
    o   Set up your online calendar to do appropriate reminders
    o   Try Jott (www.jott.com) or Sandy (www.iwantsandy.com)
    o   Consider migrating personal email (and work if allowed) to Gmail
    o   Publish your own resources on the web (videos, links to help teach a course, worksheets you've written)
    o   Build your own social networking site using Ning
    o   Teach others!