

## **Familiarity Breeds Content: Bridging the Gap between Online Learning and Social Media with PeerWise**

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Many students entering university today are prolific users of social software, watching videos on YouTube and staying in touch with friends on Facebook. They understand the value of user-generated content which is the lifeblood of Web 2.0. PeerWise is a web-based tool that exploits the familiarity students have with these technologies, and engages them in a learning community. Using PeerWise, students work collaboratively with their peers in a particular course to construct, share, evaluate, answer and discuss a repository of relevant assessment questions.

Students are given the responsibility of creating and moderating the resource, placing practically no burden of supervision on the instructor. By leveraging the creativity and energy of a class, a large, diverse and rich resource can result. Since its first use at the University of Auckland in 2007, more than 50,000 questions and 1.5 million answers have been contributed by students at 45 institutions. In 2009, PeerWise won the Australasian Association for Engineering Education Award for innovation in curricula, learning and teaching.

This hands-on workshop introduces the PeerWise tool, giving participants an opportunity to experiment with the interface and view typical examples of the real-time feedback that is produced. Benefits of involving students in the construction and sharing of assessment questions will also be discussed. Student perceptions, repository quality, and the relationship between student activity and performance in formal examinations have been studied. A selection of these results will be presented, as will ideas for future work. Upon completion of the workshop, participants wishing to utilise PeerWise in their own classes will be able to do so in a matter of minutes.

See:

<http://peerwise.cs.auckland.ac.nz/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1tN006KEWo>

### **Brief Bio**

Since 2000, Paul Denny has taught in the Computer Science Department at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. With a focus on the introductory sequence, typified by large classes, he has interests in contributing student pedagogies and technologies for supporting collaborative learning. He created PeerWise in 2007 to support these approaches, and is a recipient of a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award (2009) and the Computing Research and Education Association of Australasia Teaching Award (2010). His visit to the University of New South Wales is supported by a 2010 Universitas 21 Fellowship.