

Afterword

Charles Darwin observed that it's not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but those most adaptive to change. For humankind, the pace of change has been accelerating, and never as rapidly as in the past century. One hundred years ago, our body of knowledge doubled only once every century. Today, our body of knowledge doubles every few years. In our digitized, microchipped world there is virtually no subject that cannot be Googled, downloaded, and consumed. In higher education the challenge is clear. How can we analyze and apply that information in ways that will help our learning institutions thrive? How do we turn that ubiquitous cloud of information into real knowledge?

In his remarks elsewhere in this book, Richard N. Katz talks about the 10 threads that have influenced the tapestry of higher education since the inception of the academy. In this new millennium, technology is the bright new strand that weaves through our institutions and binds them to one another, enabling an unprecedented degree of collaboration and learning. That digital thread connects us to something more than information. It connects us to the world of ideas.

And those ideas are changing the practice of education. Classroom instruction has been augmented and sometimes replaced with online learning. Traditional office hours are increasingly supplemented with e-mail and online conversations. What lies ahead? What will the classrooms of tomorrow be like? Will there even be classrooms? How will the relationship between teacher and learner change? And how will technology affect that change?

We are pleased to serve as a sponsor of *The Tower and the Cloud*, a collection of essays that asks us all to imagine that future together. At SunGard Higher Education, we imagine a future where the lines blur between institutions and organizations, between consumers of technology and solution providers, between learners and teachers. In this future, new ways of knowing, more creative platforms for learning, and better forums for understanding will create new opportunities for those of us who share a passion for education.

We hope to see you there.

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