

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

Craig Ullman

The Pod People have arrived, and the changes they bring with them will be as thrilling—and disturbing—as any 'fifties sci-fi movie.

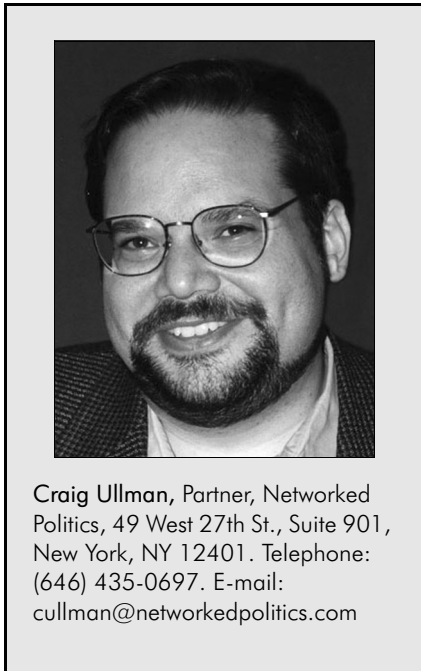
It began, like all frightening changes, in some quiet corner of a lonely room: a tormented technoid, huddled in front of his computer, in a desperate attempt to gain some measure of revenge from a society that ostracized him, mouths seemingly

inane banter into a cheap microphone. Oh, if only someone could have stopped him! Then he “uploads” the audio file in an insidious special format on the Internet, and the first *Pod Person* was born.

This audio recording costs nothing to make or distribute, yet the Internet—like the warm primordial soup in which life began—is a perfect medium for mass replication. A few other social outcasts became Pod People and began creating their own content—mostly the ravings of madmen, or music they didn’t have the rights to.

But how would the public know how to find or hear these otherworldly sounds? If the public never knew how to access the Pod People’s messages, even then, we could have stopped it.

That’s when the Pod People made their decisive move, and destroyed forever the world we knew: they reached out to *Him*. The Silicon Valley Guru, the man who speaks to millions of acolytes every year at Expos devoted to his worship and the adoration of cult objects that embody his “Insanely Great” spirit. He ordered his mindless followers to buy little devices and



use special software to access the Pod People's messages, and they did.

Seemingly overnight, millions of people all over the planet were listening to the "podcasts." Worse yet, the little devices followed them wherever they went: at home, at school, even in the privacy of their bedrooms. They were never away from the Pod People's messages and, by creating their own podcasts, *they became Pod People too.*

Look around you, my friends, at the innocent youths who walk your school halls: how many of them have become Pod People? Even some of the finest universities have been taken over and are breeding others (e.g., <http://engage.doit.wisc.edu/podcasting/teachAndLearn/>). Professors around the country are using podcasts to supplement traditional lectures, perhaps

even *replace them entirely.* Students now show up for class and are expected to do more than sit there and take notes. If students have already heard the lecture, and now have nothing to do but actually participate in a group discussion—or, God forbid, group activities—there's no telling what kind of forces that will unleash.

Worse yet, once you've recorded the teacher's presentation and sent it out to the Internet, there's no controlling how far and wide it will spread. How then can anyone ascribe any meaning to the term "intellectual property"?

Even K-12 isn't safe, with both students and teachers podcasting away to expand the concept of class time and give the students experience with digital media.

It's too late, my friends. It's all too late. It's the Pod People's world now.

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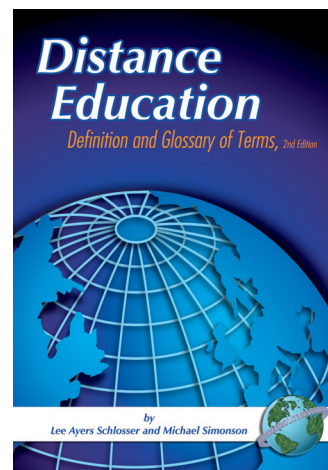
Distance Education

Definition and Glossary of Terms
(Second Edition)

by Lee Ayers Schlosser, Southern Oregon University
and Michael Simonson, Nova Southeastern University

Distance Education has become a major topic of interest in the field of educational communications and technology. In response to this interest, the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) published the first edition of *Distance Education: Definition and Glossary of Terms* in 2002.

The second edition of this monograph was begun in 2005. While the definition of distance education was changed only slightly, the glossary of terms was updated significantly under the supervision of Joann Flick and members of AECT's Division of Distance Learning. The definition of distance education and much of the supporting narrative offered in this edition of *Distance Education: Definition and Glossary of Terms* is based on *Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of Distance Education*, 3rd. edition (2006). This information is used with permission.



CONTENTS: Acknowledgments. Preface. Defining Distance Education. Emerging Definitions. A Brief History of Distance Education. Theory and Distance Education. Summary. Glossary of Terms. References. Additional Readings.

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