**Project Description:** Last fall our institution piloted the use of Wordpress MU (now just Wordpress with a multisite installation. Wordpress was used to fulfill multiple objectives. It was used to facilitate communication between the faculty, a faculty bridge builder (Kathryn) (helping the faculty use the technology to instantiate pedagogical and educational goals), and an IT specialist/administrator (Mike). Using Wordpress made it easy to archive and categorize support provided to the faculty. In the case of the particular faculty member (Kathleen) at the center of this pilot Wordpress was chosen to encourage more substantive discourse amongst her students concerning important educational issues.

**Technology:** Wordpress MU (now Wordpress (MS) ) is blogging server software. In conjunction with Wordpress we also ran Buddypress as a social networking tool on top of the Wordpress installation. During the pilot we did not utilize the social networking aspects of Buddypress, however; it was a great tool for managing multiple blogs.

**The Participants: :** Kathryn Dirkin and Kathleen Moxley are faculty members in the Teacher Education and Professional Development department. Kathryn teaches courses in educational technology and Kathleen teaches methods courses in literacy. Mike Reuter is the Director of Technology Operations for the College of Education and Human Services.

**The Case:** Kathleen had some prior experience with Blogspot but was new to the Wordpress interface when she began the project. Her experience with blogging was typical of the faculty at our institution. The plan to support her in the deployment of blogs in her classroom was multi-faceted. Kathryn served as the bridge builder helping to communicate specific concerns to Mike as well as design support materials tailored to Kathleen’s needs. Kathryn was also the author and designer of the communication blog ([Technology Integration](https://edublog.cmich.edu/techint/)). This blog was an important source of support for the project. Mike provided on-site and classroom support. Listed below are the specific strategies utilized in this pilot.

**Strategies to Support Technology Integration Using Wordpress MU:**

* Provide heavy support early on in the administration and use of the blog. This support was gradually removed as Kathleen became more comfortable with the project.
* Use a question framework to title posts- as questions shared through email were generally answered in the blog. When possible videos were also created to provide additional support.
* Limit the implementation of technology tools. (e.g., Kathleen did not use an rss reader to monitor the feeds- instead links to the student blogs were posted on her website)
* Offer options - there are many ways to use a singular piece of technology; a good fit is not only based on the needs of the user(s), but their experience as well. To help faculty make intelligent choices outline the benefits and limitations of those choices.
* Have “Conversations” about how to use the technology. Faculty can make better, more informed choices if you bring them into the decision making process. Using the “Conversation” header in our title and using it as a tag also helped to separate out these debates as well as archive them.

**A Note on Limitations:** Learning to use blogs as a tool can be quite an undertaking. Faculty members not only have to learn how to use the technology, itself, but they must also figure out how to use it as a pedagogical tool. Furthermore, additional management issues arise. For example, Kathleen is using blogs again during her spring semester of teaching. This means that she has to monitor close to 100 blogs. Readers are a great tool (and a new technology to learn!) but adding 100 feeds to your reader can be time consuming. Furthermore, there have been some issues with the rss feeds of our installment. Note: it is possible to import a list of sites with a single file.