Information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing forever the nature of education familiar to the modern Western world. Serving as a socio-cultural "scalpel", ICT is slicing through traditional contexts revealing the potential of its impact on conventional teaching and learning across the curriculum. The intention is for education to bring about the democratic reconstruction of social media for individual empowerment. Such is one perception of the current state of schooling early in the twenty-first century, drawn from the controversial themes addressed in the eleven chapters contributed by fifteen authors and an additional preface writer to the recent book ICT, Pedagogy and the Curriculum.

Collectively, the issues raised by the editors' selections aim to stimulate debate about the differing aspects of the cultural context, the situation and the purpose of education as they experience the infusion of digital technologies. In their introduction editors Loveless and Ellis consider the cultural context of ICT to be distinguished by three major features, namely, the sociopolitical, the economic and the mental—a broad landscape of communication.

Sanger notes that traditionally classes of students spend long periods of time grouped in small rooms to receive curricular course instruction from a single teacher or professor. However, he suggests that the present state of that formal system of mass schooling is no longer tenable and predicts it will soon deteriorate into a "marketplace of competing religious and secular ideologies, each with an imperative to create a consumerism that pays" (p.18). In the new regime the interests and rights of the individual learner will become paramount.

While one might doubt at least the extent of that prediction, Buckingham and colleagues refer to evidence of already existing worldwide private-public partnerships intent on "selling the digital dream" to teachers, parents and children. Through glittery, hyperactive advertising of 'edutainment' promising solutions of fun and learning for mainly unidentified educational problems, the growing ICT consumer targeting appears to proceed unabated, while being supported by government without any significant, evaluative discourse, they suggest. Meanwhile, as Snyder explains, apparently the digital determination is to
redesign the world. The digital media, now reculturing our lives, he says, is “a product of hybrid vigour” resulting from the remaking of older verbal-text-dominant technologies, through the challenge of dynamic visual-graphic imagery into a new multimodal communicative order of borderless, global scope.

The editors focus in on pedagogy in the second section with three distinctly different perspectives, but each raising the same question about the meaning of teaching in this age of information technologies. Loveless and colleagues argue that the best qualities of intelligent teaching, which developed the educated person in the past, will continue to be essential as knowledge in its old constant state is negotiated into new variable forms under the influence of ICT. These authors advocate that teachers spend the time needed to learn, plan and prepare to change their own beliefs, knowledge and practice in relation to the potential of ICT for their profession. LeCourt recommends, furthermore, that critical pedagogy be the curriculum for ICT in education because the textual spaces provided by computer-mediated communication technologies offer the advantage of revisiting existing practice. She proposes that using ICT to critique cultural contexts could lead toward active self-social transformation of structural hierarchies of power in society.

Hawkey presents a critical look at science in informal settings like museums. He sees severe misappropriation of teaching science by education in schools. He challenges the reader’s understanding of what the public believes scientific research actually is, and what science education should be. His urges doing science actively using the informal, interactive possibilities of ICT and encourages the reader to ask questions about the nature of science and knowledge.

Finally in the third section, five authors look at familiar curriculum subject domains (English, mathematics, science, visual art and music) which are undergoing rapid change under the influence of continually updated technologies. In each instance, under the influence of technology, the presentation of past knowledge tends to take on a new dynamic character enticing the learner to utilize both the possibilities of new modalities. For example, writing of new multimodal ‘texts’ is re-presenting English language and literature as a critical literacy. New modeling of symbolic mathematics knowledge and processes in computer-based visual forms is aiding learners’ cognition and understanding. Seeing science education from a gendered perspective through the use of ICT offers new self and social identities for feminist and visible minorities. Expressing personal visual art ideas creatively with digital technologies can be appealing, whether one is manually talented in art or not. Similarly in music education, using the new technologies for music making and transmission open unlimited opportunities for intercultural communication.

In sum, the book presents a host of issues for education which Heppell says in the preface governments and educators will ignore at their peril. The volume could serve as a platform from which to mount wholly new teacher and administrator professional development education. But, it should be said that the determination to reconstruct the world via information technologies must recognize that the appeal of multimedia is basically a psychological seduction premised on virtual reality, only a simulation of the real thing (Ragsdale and Kassam, 1994). Similarly, the physical reality of our children’s daily lives in the face of the burgeoning technological sophistication in their presence, reminds us of the need to provide stabilizing educational guidance for the body and by the