



Illinois Computing Educators
Computer Update Bulletin for Educators

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A Penny For Your Thoughts



Penny Swartz,
ICE President

I'd like to begin by sharing ICE's newly developed mission statement: "The mission of Illinois

Computing Educators is to lead the educational community in enhancing learning through technology." If any of you have ever been involved in developing a mission statement, you know it is no easy task. At the ICE Governing Board meeting on August 13, 2005, the Board spent the better part of the day working with ClearSpace, Inc., a consulting company that helps organizations define and work on their missions and goals. It was very interesting to take part in this process and to experience the feeling of accomplishment when the entire Governing Board aligned behind this statement of ICE's mission. We ended the meeting by identifying the functional areas of ICE and brainstorming goals within these areas, all of which are driven by our mission statement. We will prioritize these goals and develop action plans at future Governing Board meetings.

This issue of ICE Cube focuses on blogging and podcasting in education. It was amazing to me that at NECC 2005, almost every keynote and spotlight speaker mentioned these evolving technologies, and at every time slot for breakout sessions there was a presentation or panel on them too! The NECC website even has links (<http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2005/glance/blogging.php>) to the many presenters who were blogging and podcasting their NECC experiences throughout the conference. By the way, have you ever gone to a conference and wanted to attend more than one simultaneous session, but knew you

couldn't be in two places at once? Podcasting just might be the answer to your dreams. So many educational uses for these new communication tools were touted at the conference, that it seemed only appropriate to share them with our membership.

If you don't know what these terms mean, you are not alone. Blogging first came to be in 1999. Podcasting is a word that didn't even exist two years ago, and it was just added to the Oxford English Dictionary last August. A Google search of "blogs AND education" led me to 50,500,000 hits; a similar Google search of "podcasts AND education" led to 5,730,000 hits. Obviously, there is much interest in how to utilize these tools.

Briefly, blogs (weblogs) are websites where the author posts (some daily, some weekly, some less often) about a topic or multiple topics. The postings occur in reverse chronological order. Most blogs include links to other Internet sites and usually allow for responses from readers of the blog. Although they originally consisted mostly of online diaries, there are now blogs on almost any subject you can imagine.

Podcasting is the creating of audio files (usually in MP3 format) to be available online in a format that allows special software to detect and download the files so that listeners can access them when it is convenient to do so. I've heard podcasting described as TiVo for radio.

One thing that makes blogs and podcasting very attractive to educators is that they are basically free. The software can be obtained at no cost on the Internet, and free tools and webspace are offered by Internet portals including Google (www.blogger.com), MSN (spaces.msn.com) and Yahoo (360.yahoo.com). The technology is becoming easier and easier for even relatively low-tech people to use. Blogger.com boasts that one can set up a blog in less than five

minutes. Additionally, they both provide students an authentic audience – for writing and speech - immediately!

For those of you who are relative beginners, I would like to suggest a few websites I learned about at NECC to familiarize you with blogging and podcasting:

<http://mustangblog.typepad.com/educationalweblogs>
Definitions of weblogs, instructional uses of, types of weblogs, weblog vocabulary, blog hosting options

<http://mustangblog.typepad.com/educationalweblogs>
Michael Lackner's site providing links and resources about best educational blogging practices and a downloadable PowerPoint presentation "Educational Weblogs: Cutting Edge Uses of This Emerging Technology"

<http://anne.teachesme.com>
Anne Davis's Edublog all about using blogs in Education – the projects, the problems, etc.

<http://www.weblogg-ed.com>
Will Richardson uses a blog as a discussion board in his American Literature Class for books his students read, such as *The Secret Life of Bees*. His website is an ongoing discussion about the educational uses of blogs

<http://www3.essdack.org/socialstudies/blogs.htm>
Hosted by the Education Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas, this site supplies links to all of the resources, tools and software that you need to get started with blogs.

<http://davidwarlick.com/mambo/index.php>
Links to David Warlick's blog, *2¢ Worth* and his podcast, *Connect Learning*.

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Illinois Technology Conference for Educators 2006: Igniting Student Achievement

We are now accepting online registration for the upcoming Illinois Technology Conference for Educators. This is sure to be our best conference yet, so you won't want to miss it. Be sure to visit <http://www.il-tce.org>, and register today!

We are offering over 60 all-day workshops on February 28 and March 1, 2006. These sessions fill up quickly, so register soon to reserve your spot. In addition, we will have hundreds of breakout sessions during the general conference days on March 2 and 3, 2006.

This year's keynote addresses will be given by Chris Dede (March 2) and David Warlick (March 3). **Dr. Chris Dede** is the Timothy E. Wirth Professor of Learning Technologies at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. His funded research includes a grant from the National Science Foundation to aid middle school students learning science via shared virtual environments with digitized museum artifacts, a grant from the Joyce Foundation to aid the Milwaukee Public Schools in implementing a knowledge portal for teacher professional development, and a grant from Harvard to explore applications of wireless handheld devices in higher education. **David Warlick** is the Director of the Landmark Project based in Raleigh North Carolina. A former history teacher, district level administrator, and IT specialist with the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, he is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in innovative applications of technology, especially the Internet. He has spoken at conferences, seminars and workshops in most states and many other countries; writes for a number of magazines and journals; and has developed numerous curriculum projects over the global network, including the second oldest continuing online project, the Global Grocery List.

In addition, our tentative list of exceptional local and national spotlight speakers includes the following: Glenda Bequette, Illinois State Board of Education; Tim Lauer, Principal of Lewis Elementary School, Portland, Oregon; Gail Lovely; Susim Munshi, Chicago Public Schools; Susan Switzer, Chicago Public Schools; Will Richardson, Supervisor of Instructional Technology and Communications at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington, NJ; Tony Vincent; Tammy Worcester, Instructional Technology Specialist, ESSDACK.

Finally, it's not too late to present at the conference. We are still seeking poster session presenters. To submit a proposal, log in at <http://www.il-tce.org/proposals>. Presenting is a great way to share your expertise with other educators in Illinois, and lead presenters receive FREE REGISTRATION on the day they present.

See you at IL-TCE 2006!



A Penny For Your Thoughts

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I'd like to end this discussion with a fun website. Hard as this may be to believe, there are Oscar-type awards given for blogs. Last March saw the fifth annual Weblog Awards. Thirty "Bloggies" were given to weblog writers and those related to weblogs in categories such as Best Weblog About Politics, Best-Designed Weblog, Best Humorous Weblog, etc. The prizes are not statues. Instead they range from Amazon gift certificates, cash, t-shirts, and registrations to the South by Southwest Interactive Festival where the Weblog Awards ceremony is held. Read all about them (and nominate and/or vote yourself) at: <http://2005.bloggies.com>.

By the way, if you didn't have a chance to attend NECC last summer in Philadelphia,

I highly encourage you to view the posted materials and webcasts from the conference

(www.neccsite.org). Fourteen videos of keynote speakers and others were selected for recording by ISTE and will be available until the end of 2006. Go to <http://www.kidzonline.org/necc/tech.html> to access the links and download a free media player (if you don't already have one).

I encourage you to plan to attend NECC 2006 in San Diego. The National Educational Computing Conferences (NECC) provides an opportunity to see the newest technology tools and products available, listen to and interact with others in the education field most invested in technology, and be challenged to find new and better ways to use technology effectively and creatively in an educational setting. As an added bonus, you may come home with a wonderful prize. Several ICE members came home from NECC 2006 with numerous software programs, flash drives, subscriptions to journals, t-shirts, and computer bags. But most exciting was that ICE member Sr. Loretta Glanz won the grand

prize – registration and a free trip to San Diego for NECC 2006!

As I write this article about the current and future NECC conferences, I cannot help but reflect on the fact that just over a year ago NECC took place in New Orleans. It's hard to believe that the vibrant city we all enjoyed has been so ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. Interestingly, over the Labor Day weekend, Relief Connections, a web portal providing a forum for those who would like to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina raised approximately 1.5 million dollars through the postings of the 1,877 blogs that participated. Blogs were considered a critical communication tool for people helping in the Katrina recovery and for finding the survivors (see http://bloggersblog.com/hurricane_katrina for a summary of over 200,000 blog postings).

As you explore and find new instructional uses for blogging and podcasting, I hope you will share them with your local ICE chapters.

Blogging – Reinventing Teaching and Learning, Revolutionizing Education!

By Susim Munshi & Susan Switzer,
Chicago Public Schools

Ninety-nine percent of our schools are connected to the Internet with a 5:1 student to computer ratio.¹ Ninety percent of children between ages 5 and 17 use computers.² Seventy-two percent of all first graders use a home computer on a weekly basis and 97 percent of kindergarteners have access to a computer at home.³ Yet, we have not realized the promise of technology in education. In most schools, it is business as usual. Computers are isolated in computer labs rather than being a central part of the learning experience.

Web Logs or Blogs are a new form of story telling that caters to today's students as ultra-communicators. To center student use of technology on the learner and provide learners with voices, start blogging!

As we seek to leverage the increased access to technology, we have sought to provide students with voices that can be heard by each member of their learning community. We will share our stories, and guide you to starting your own school blog or classroom blog.

Susan Switzer Tells a Story

As a graduate student of Educational Technology, I was intrigued by how engaging online discussion forums were. I realized that there is nowhere to hide, no back of the class to slouch into. In an online discussion forum, learners are compelled to actively participate in an exchange of ideas and opinions. I knew I wanted to apply my experiences of using an online discussion forum to develop an online book club for the Junior High School aged students that I worked with.

Kids have so much to say and not enough time in the classroom to say it. Students need a way to express their thoughts and ideas in an organized way. Blogging is a wonderful way for students to interact and share their opinions about books, interests, or themes. Computers are the way to draw students into writing activities that they normally would resist."

~ One Teacher's Reaction to Blogging

The concept was simple enough; teachers would engage students in face-to-face shared readings of a selected novel in a traditional

literature circle. The class would converse about the novel in a face-to-face manner. This conversation would continue in the online forum after the face-to-face time had expired. All student responses were time and date stamped for everyone to refer back to at a time that was suitable for them. Time stamped responses provided an embedded accountability tool for the teacher which, in turn, compelled each student to participate in the discussions. There would be no hiding in the back of the class because each learner's thoughts and opinions were revealed in the forum. Furthermore, students would be able to respond to one another and continue the conversation during the traditional literature circle time. The online book club model was enabled through the generous support of ePals Classroom Exchange, Inc. (<http://www.epals.com>)

The use of the discussion forum was engaging and yielded benefits, yet the structure of the forum was limiting for class use. The use of blogs as a tool to instantly express personal thoughts for a global audience was a perfect match for the emerging needs of the learners. Through the use of blogs classes were able to progress from literature discussions to project based learning. As a result, the concept of the online

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book club was later merged with an existing model; *Read, Write and Blog* that was spearheaded by my colleague, Susim Munshi. Susim and I teamed up to explore the potential of educational blogs as a strategy to enable students to exchange thoughts, opinions and ideas about a variety of academic topics from sharing extended response solutions to tackling concerns about school community safety.

Susim Munshi Tells a Story

In 2003, the six regions of the Chicago Public Schools were reorganized into elementary and high school areas. Each area was headed by an Area Instructional Officer and staffed by instructional coaches in reading, math, science and technology, together called the Area Instructional Team. The area team used the “school walk-through” process to observe and improve instruction and student achievement in schools. As the area team went on walk-throughs to the forty-four schools that made up Area One, we began to notice that while students were writing a variety of journals, there was no meaningful and significant guided instruction about journals and no planned assessment of the journals. In fact, the area instructional officer nearly stamped out journals as it existed in our schools. The officer insisted that if there was no real plan to use journals to assess and improve student writing, then journaling was a waste of valuable instructional time.

Around that same time I was reading Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees*. While conducting a Google search for reading group ideas, I discovered the many blogs by teachers and students about the book. Immediately I began to visit and explore blogs, blogging services, and the feasibility of using blogs as a tool for student journals focused on read, write and think. Through the generous contribution of Weblogger (<http://www.weblogger.com>), I established the Learn2blog web site (<http://learn2blog.weblogger.com>). I designed and began to offer teachers professional development in using blogs as an instructional tool for student journaling. The website has since evolved with the help of my colleague, Susan Switzer, into a place for teachers to learn, practice and host blogs.

Blogs – Why Blog?

Through our work as Area Instructional Technology Coordinators for the Chicago Public Schools, we found varied uses of the

Internet by students, many of which did not meet the National Education Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S). Some of the uses observed included the isolated use of drill and practice games, snatching images of favorite sports icons, and locating song lyrics. At the same time we observed appropriate uses of the Internet including accessing primary sources and completing standards-aligned Web quests. Advocating the appropriate uses of the Internet, we rallied around maintaining blogs as an online tool to develop 21st century learning skills with an emphasis on learning core subjects. As the use of blogs continued, further benefits of capturing students’ thinking processes and making learning more public were realized. To date, participants in the Read, Write and Blog project have successfully created blogs about book reviews, character journals, literacy reaction journals, math problem solving, science data comparison, and Project-based learning activities.

So What is Blogging? Is Blogging Right for Me?

A blog is a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is “blogging” and someone who keeps a blog is a “blogger.” A review of school blogs online shows that:

- Blogs allow students to express themselves on their own terms.
- Blogs give students their own soapbox, their own voice.
- Blogs encourage students to become habitual writers who are in control of their writing.

Several methods of assessment are inherent in blogging, and some that we have identified strongly demonstrate the value of blogs in instruction:

- All blog postings are date and time stamped, evidencing that students are engaging in their learning.
- Frequency of communication with teachers and peers provide evidence that students are choosing their own learning.
- Frequency of responses to different activities demonstrates a differentiated approach to instruction; one size does not fit all.
- And finally, all the postings are easily available for the teacher to assess for content, conventions and process at their own convenience.

Considerations Before Starting an Instructional Blog

- Understand the Technology

Research and understand what a blog is, how it works, who is using it, and for what

purpose. Get comfortable with this model of publishing by reading about the distinctive features of blogs and reading various blogs yourself. Learn what is out there and where your learners fit in to the equation.

- Have a Clear Purpose

What do you want to achieve by having student blogs? Be specific on the purpose of the blogs and be certain of the goals you are trying to achieve. Remember that blogs may fulfill needs within your organization that you have not even considered.

- Create Guidelines and Policies

This is where you define some parameters around what is acceptable for your student blogs. Determine who will manage the blogs and what degree of autonomy or moderation you desire from your blogs. The key here is to create structure around your effort without trying to overly police the project or you will lose the very benefits inherent to the blogging model.

- Choose the Tools

You need to determine some of the basics. Will you host your own blogging software or will you use an online hosting service?

Where Can I Start?

To get started with blogging you can visit the site that we created to aid educators in developing classroom blogs – <http://learn2blog.weblogger.com>. The site is dynamic and evolving. We currently use it to teach, demonstrate, and host school blogs. At the site you will find Tips and Tools, How Tos, Discussions, Teacher Reactions, Resources and Activities to teach curriculum integration and blogging basics. The site is user driven, and we encourage visitors to become members so that they feel empowered to shape the site.

Susim Munshi, skmunshi@cps.k12.il.us, is a Technology Integration Specialist, Office of Technology Services eLearning, Chicago Public Schools. Susan Switzer, spswitzer@cps.k12.il.us, is an Assistant Principal and Technology Coordinator at George Rogers Clark Elementary School, Chicago Public Schools. You can visit their work at <http://learn2blog.weblogger.com>.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Internet Access in U.S. Public School and Classrooms: 1994-2002* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003)

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Young children’s Access to Computers in the Home and at School in 1999 and 2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2003).

³ Corporation for Public Broadcasting, *Connected to the Future* (Washington, DC: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2003).

Is Your Information Technology Accessible to All Students?

By E.G. Enbar, *Equip for Equality, Public Policy Program*

Equip for Equality, a statewide disability rights organization, has been collaborating with the Great Lakes ADA and Accessible Information Technology (IT) Center to increase awareness of the issue of providing *accessible* IT in the Illinois K-12 schools. Our objective is to promote and assist in the development and implementation of an accessible IT environment for students and staff. This article will serve to introduce you to the idea of accessibility within the IT framework and to highlight the importance of thinking *accessibility* when computer hardware and software procurement decisions are made by your school/district.

Introduction:

It sounds like a simple and obvious enough concept – the ability to *access* information technology (IT). As educators or technology coordinators, we know that some students require an accommodation or adaptation to use the computers in their classrooms and labs. This requirement is generally known as providing students with specific *assistive* technology. It's true that individuals with disabilities may use assistive technology in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. For example, people with limited hand function may use a keyboard with large keys or a special mouse to operate a computer, people who are blind may use software that reads text in a computer-generated voice, or people with speech impairments may use a device that speaks out loud as they enter text via a keyboard.

There is an abundant array of assistive technology products available today, so what's the fuss about accessibility? The fact is that having the appropriate assistive technology is no guarantee of having *access*. Our educational goal is to ensure that every student can fully participate in the academic curriculum, but most schools address IT accessibility as an afterthought and on an individual student basis, making it more difficult and costly to provide adequate access. Information technology (IT) accessibility is dependent on accessible or *universal design* features – the design of IT products usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. By incorporating the principles of universal

design, accessible IT is either directly accessible – usable without assistive technology – or it is compatible with standard assistive technology. *An accessible IT product always gives the user more than one means of achieving a task.*

Here are some examples of accessible IT:

Accessible software applications:

- Utilize established standards for displaying menus and prompts that can be understood by assistive technology.
- Allows users to use the mouse alone, the keyboard alone, or a combination of the two.
- Rely on more than color to convey information.
- Installation instructions, user guides, etc. are available in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille or electronic texts.

Accessible multimedia products (videotapes, CDs, DVDs):

- Synchronized text captions for spoken information and other audio content and synchronized audio descriptions for visual content, benefiting students who are hearing and/or visually impaired.
- Providing keyboard commands for all functions of the software allows blind users to participate.

Accessible websites:

- Designed so that all users can navigate the site and participate in interactive web activities. Text equivalent (i.e. description) for all non-text parts (i.e. audio, graphics, images) is accessible, thereby allowing blind students to “read” a picture using a screen reader.¹

IT Advances Create Accessibility Barriers:

Computer technology has rapidly evolved in the last 20+ years, however, the consequence of

our current, more sophisticated, technology is that it has produced barriers to people with myriad disabilities. The Disk Operating System (DOS), and operating systems similar to DOS, was the standard system used in computers when they were first introduced to schools and the workplace in the 1980s. With the aid of adaptive or assistive technology, people with disabilities were

generally able to use this earlier technology with relative ease. For example, screen readers were easily utilized by students who are blind because all the commands necessary to interact with the software were discrete and text-based - and the commands were launched via the keyboard. Similarly, auditory features were limited in earlier technology applications, making the technology more accessible for people who were deaf or hard of hearing.

The change from a DOS environment to one of graphical user interfaces (GUI) has produced numerous accessibility barriers for people with numerous disabilities. Some common problems are:

- Navigating the technology with a computer *mouse* to *point* and *click* onto an icon to achieve a task. Some students are unable to manipulate a mouse and/or work successfully in a *point and click* only option.
- Incompatible software, i.e. software that depends on image and sound may be a barrier when images or icons are used that flash either too fast or too slow.
- Software may not recognize the computer's personal operating systems settings, such as increased font size, that was set by the user.²
- Technology can become an obstacle for a person with a disability if the accessibility features are not *built-in*.

Legislative and Legal Mandates for Equal Access:

These statutes may be familiar to you. They were instrumental towards breaking down barriers for people with disabilities and highlight the federal government's legal remedies to thwart discrimination.

• Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- **Section 504** - protects individuals with physical or mental disabilities from discrimination based on their disability; applies to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department or agency

- **Section 508** (amended 1998) - for federal agencies to procure, develop, maintain and use only accessible electronic and information technology for their own use or use of the public

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- **Americans with Disabilities Act** (1990) - applies non-discrimination principles to state and local governments, as well as private entities
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (1997, re-authorized in 2004) - federal special education law that includes provisions to ensure that children have meaningful and equal access to the general curriculum.
- **Section 255 of the Federal Communications Act of 1996** requires manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and providers of telecommunications services to ensure that equipment and services are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, if readily achievable.

Section 508 is the only federal legislation that includes accessibility standards for the design and procurement of electronic and information technology. While Section 508 applies only to the federal government, its standards can be used as accessibility guidelines by educational institutions to help them achieve compliance with Section 504 and the ADA.

A few states, such as Kentucky, California, and Arkansas, have focused on K-12 education when they adopted Section 508 accessibility standards.³ However, actual implementation of the accessibility standards in the schools in those states has been a slow process, due in large part to inconsistent language utilized in education adoptions of Section 508. Strong, coherent legislative language is needed to put adequate and steady pressure on vendors to produce a substantial quantity of accessible products. Without pressure from the U.S. Department of Education and local school entities, however, the vendor community is less likely to dedicate the requisite monetary resources for developing new, accessible products. This is a pure and simple case of *supply and demand*.

Legislating *access* to the technology is vital for students with disabilities, but mandating the *procurement* of accessible instructional materials by educational entities increases the likelihood of achieving more equitable access to technology for all students. **By considering accessibility at the time of making procurement decisions, students and staff with disabilities have more timely access to IT and the costs associated with retrofitting or providing individual**

accommodations are significantly reduced.

Developing a District-Wide Accessible IT Policy: Best Practices

Procurement of accessible IT is best achieved by developing and promoting a written policy that clearly defines *accessible* IT and identifies the ways in which compliance will be monitored and enforced.

- Include stakeholders, such as students and staff with disabilities, in the process.
- Review current policies and procedures for the procurement, use and development of electronic and IT and consider how accessibility issues might be incorporated.
- Characteristics of an effective policy should:
 - State a commitment to make all programs, services and resources accessible to students and employees with disabilities.
 - Identify who is accountable for planning, implementation and evaluation of accessible IT.
 - Clearly define the technical level of accessibility that must be achieved.
 - Stipulate ways in which the policy will be disseminated.
 - Address *monitoring and enforcement* and how to evaluate progress.
 - Address how resources will be provided for the necessary *training and support*.
 - Allow for flexibility in altering specifications when technology changes without having to renegotiate the entire policy.
- Develop procedures for responding to requests for disability-related accommodations when the IT used is not accessible to a student or employee.
- Consider 508 standards as a model for the school entity's standards.

When school entities begin to focus on the issue of evaluating and procuring accessible technology-based instructional products, they may consider two disparate policy options – products procured via a **centralized** purchasing policy or a **distributed** purchasing policy. Both options have their pros and cons. Either way, the critical issue is that the school/district's IT staff be in ongoing, close communication with the school/district's Assistive Technology staff and Special Education teachers to insure that IT procurement decisions meet the needs of the students by meeting requisite accessibility criteria.

Centralized policy:

- Teachers submit purchase requests to the central administration in a district office for approval.
- Teachers are prevented from purchasing products that are not compatible with existing hardware and networks.
- Individual school curriculum goals may be centrally reviewed and kept more easily in sync with district and state standards.
- Ability to manage the numerous software licenses for the district more efficiently.
- Curriculum decisions are taken away from classroom teachers, which may impact the degree to which technology is integrated into the curriculum.

Distributed policy:

- Gives the purchasing power to teachers by letting them make curriculum decisions for their own classrooms.
- May increase the likelihood that the technology will be integrated effectively - but teachers making ad hoc purchasing decisions without a standard evaluation process may perpetuate problems with systems and networks incompatibility.
- Legal responsibility and liability issues related to installation and license management may also fall on the individual teachers.
- Inequitable technology opportunities within the school and across the district may be another unforeseen problem with this strategy.

A school entity may also adapt a procurement strategy that effectively combines a mostly centralized policy with some elements of a distributed one. For example, a centralized review committee comprised of teachers may be convened annually to evaluate new technologies. This committee publishes a list of approved products and classroom teachers throughout the school district make purchasing decisions from the pre-approved list.

Conclusion:

As the technology continues to grow useful and necessary in our daily lives, accessibility barriers must be eliminated in our educational system, so that every student is fully prepared to flourish in our advanced technological age. Schools have an increasing legal and moral obligation to insure that all students can participate in and take advantage of the

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educational curriculum. IT accessibility is achievable and cost effective once school leaders make the commitment to procure only IT products that meet accessibility standards. When procurement departments demand accessible products from vendors, they will respond by putting the necessary research and development into meeting that demand.

Resources and Organizations that Promote Accessible IT:

Great Lakes ADA and Accessible Information Technology Center, housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is one of ten regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation

Research (NIDRR), a division of the U.S. Department of Education. **It provides technical assistance and training to schools**, businesses and people with disabilities regarding the ADA and promotes acquisition and use of accessible IT in education settings. For more information, call: 800-949-4232 (voice/TTY) or <http://www.adagreatlakes.org>.

AccessIT - National Center on Accessible Information Technology in Education, promotes the use of electronic and IT for students and employees with disabilities in educational institutions at all academic levels. <http://www.washington.edu/accessit/index.php>

Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center, promoting accessibility through training and assistance. <http://www.ittatc.org/>

Cast: Universal Design for Learning, researches and develops ways to support learners according to their individual strengths and needs. <http://www.cast.org>

CoSN: The Consortium for School Networking, works to advance the K-12 technology leadership. <http://www.cosn.org/> **The Accessible Technologies for all Students Project** is a new leadership initiative of CoSN. <http://www.accessibletech4all.org/>

1 A significant resource for this article is AccessIT, National Center on Accessible Information Technology in Education, University of Washington, <http://www.washington.edu/access/accessit/index.php>

2 Hendricks, P & Daley, J. (2001). Mid-Atlantic Regional Technology in Education Consortium, TECHNO Brief 139, <http://www.temple.edu/martec/publications/technobriefs/tbrief39.html>

3 The Kentucky Accessible Information Schools Project has adapted the official 508 standards, at <http://www.katsnet.org/technical-standards-checklists.html>

Podcasting in Education

by Steve Dembo
Galapagos Charter School

Podcasting is the latest technology trend to sweep the nation. Unlike many others though, it has moved from a relatively unknown status to becoming a household word in barely over a year. The rate of growth it has exhibited is as astonishing as it is significant. A year ago, the term podcasting was only known by those on the cutting edge of technology. Today, podcasting is being used by television networks, motion picture studios, and radio stations, as well as by thousands of people with something to share. Podcasting has been covered numerous times throughout the nation by newspapers, magazines, and news channels.

What is a podcast?

A podcast is most often described as a radio show with a few key differences. Instead of being created in a sound studio and being distributed over the airwaves, it is most often created on a computer and distributed via the internet. Traditional radio shows are broadcast in real time. If one were to miss the beginning of a show, there would be no way to rewind it or start it over. Podcasts are prerecorded so people can listen to them whenever and wherever they like. Through a type of software known as a podcatcher, people are able to subscribe to specific

shows. When a new show is released, the podcatcher is automatically notified and downloads it. Basically, podcasts are time-shifted, subscribable programs that are distributed over the internet.

Despite the misleading name, you don't need an iPod to listen to podcasts. A podcast is nothing more than an audio recording, most often saved as an MP3. Many people listen to podcasts at their desk through the computer's speakers. Others transfer the MP3's to their portable music player of choice and listen to them on the go. Two of the most popular times to listen to podcasts are during the daily commute and while exercising.

Creating a podcast is almost as simple as listening to one. Any device that can record sound can be used to create a podcast, as long as you can get the recording into a computer. Many people record directly into their computer's built-in microphone, while others use portable handheld voice recorders. Professional podcasts are often created in a sound studio with expensive microphones and sound mixers. Some people record their entire show "live" without stopping, while others record in chunks and use sound editing software to piece it all together. The end result is the same – a single sound file that has been compressed to a small size for circulation.

Distribution is accomplished by uploading the file to the internet and using an RSS feed to alert subscribers that a new show is available. The process is identical to the way blogs work with aggregators. Each podcast has a specific feed, sort of like an internet address. People add that address to their podcatcher, which will then check the feed regularly for new content. While it may sound complicated, in practice it operates similarly to a Tivo. You tell your podcatcher that you want to subscribe to a show and it does the rest. Whenever there is a new show available, it will grab it and download it to your computer. You can then listen to it at your leisure.

The Popularity of Podcasting

I first learned about podcasting in September of 2004. At the time, there were five podcasts listed in the primary podcast directory and none of them were being recorded regularly. Today, there are 367 education related podcasts listed in the iTunes education category. The number of people podcasting has increased exponentially in a relatively short time.

One reason for the rapid growth is the simplicity of the process involved. Anybody with a microphone can create a podcast that people can subscribe to with virtually no

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monetary investment. If you have a computer and a microphone, you can have your own podcast.

In order to have your own radio show, you need access to a broadcasting studio and a transmitter. The costs involved are incredible, requiring radio stations to seek out advertisers. Advertisers will only invest in a radio program if they believe that their commercials will be heard by millions of people.

Creating a podcast has virtually no overhead and consequently has the ability to reach niche audiences that would never be large enough to merit programming time on a typical radio station. If a typical radio program had an audience of 500, it would be considered a colossal failure. A podcast with 500 listeners can be a resounding success. Even three listeners might be enough for somebody to continue podcasting. So long as there is someone who has something to say and other people who want to listen, a podcast can be considered to be successful, regardless of the size of the audience.

Podcasting and Education

Educational podcasts largely fall into three categories: schoolhouse programs, subject specific programs and professional philosophy programs.

Professional philosophy programs are by far the most widely created and listened to currently. They largely revolve around people discussing the state of education, technology, and various current events. The people creating them are mostly educators with a strong interest in technology, and the audience is exactly the same. While there is virtually no chance of hearing people discuss educational technology on traditional radio, people have a plethora of choices when it comes to podcasting. While some shows feature interviews and panel discussions, the majority feature a single person sharing his or her own personal perspective on education related issues.

Subject specific programs focus on a specific area of education, such as music, literature or math. The target audience includes other professionals and students in that field. There are at least 15 different podcasts about each of the different core subjects (Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies). There are also

several prominent shows that cover digital photography, music education and foreign languages.

Schoolhouse podcasts include institutional programs (created by the school for its community), classroom podcasts (created by teachers for their students and parents) and student podcasts. Institutional programs provide information about school events and news. Several teachers create podcasts about the events in their own classroom. While their primary target is their own audiences, these programs can be a valuable resource to other teachers. Student podcasts are usually written and produced by the students with guidance from the teacher.

Great Examples of Educational Podcasting

There are too many educational podcasts out there to listen to them all, but here are a few notable and innovative programs to check out:

Connect Learning: David Warlick has been involved in education for 30 years as a teacher, an administrator, and is currently a speaker and consultant. His podcast, "Connect Learning" discusses his thoughts on information technology and how it is changing the nature of education. (<http://davidwarlick.com/connectlearning>)

History According to Bob: Bob takes historical events and brings them to life. His casual, conversational commentary is easy to listen to and packed full of information. He podcasts daily and shows are rarely longer than 15 minutes long. (<http://www.summahistorica.com>)

The Daily Idiom: While it may not be broadcast daily, every episode features a single idiom and explains its usage and origins. Recent idioms include "Beat a dead horse" and "Face the music." (<http://box25.bluehost.com/~englishc/blogs>)

Room 208: This is a classroom podcast by 3rd and 4th graders in Wells, Maine. It's a great example of students interviewing, reflecting and sharing their ideas with the world. (<http://bobsprinkle.blogspot.com>)

Who Said?: Amy Belinger has used podcasting to create a fun literature game. Every episode she reads a passage from a well known novel. The challenge is to identify the novel, author and character who said it. (<http://www.whosaid.org>)

The EdTech Musician: This show focuses on music education as well as how technology fits into the music department. Typical topics include lessons for music teachers, discussions about composers and music history. (<http://aseymour.blogspot.com>)

How To Get Started

Before you begin creating your own podcasts, try listening to a few yourself. The simplest way to get started is to download iTunes for Windows or Mac. The software is free and has a podcasting directory built right into it. Click on Podcasts, move to the Education category and scroll through the different shows. Once you find one you might like, click "subscribe." iTunes will instantly begin downloading the most recent episodes of each show. Every podcast that I listed above can be found in the iTunes' podcast directory.

Perhaps the best place to find education related podcasts is at EPN.org, The Education Podcast Network. Every podcast is related to education, and they are very easy to subscribe to. Simply click on a podcast, then drag the orange "RSS" chicklet to your iTunes window. Everything else is automated.

If you've listened to a few podcasts and are interested in creating your own, there are several excellent guides written up by other educators. Visit http://epnweb.org/wiki-warlick/index.php?title=Producing_a_Podcast_Program to see how several prominent Education Podcasters create their shows.

The possibilities in education are endless. Podcasting can be a great way to get your students accustomed to public speaking. Perhaps you might like to provide additional information to your parents about classroom events. Some people use podcasting to create a dialogue with a community that would typically be hard to reach. Many podcasters use their programs to document their own educational journeys and invite the rest of the world to share in the experience. Podcasting has proven one thing for certain; for any given topic, there's always somebody else out there who is interested in what you have to share.

Welcome to the podosphere!

Steve Dembo is a kindergarten teacher at Galapagos Charter School in Chicago. His blog and podcast can be found at Teach42.com.

Congratulations, ICE Technology Educators of the Year!

By Faith Caron

Fostering the growth of technology integration in any school requires that two key components be in place – teachers who are dedicated to providing unique opportunities for their students, enriched through the use of technology, and dedicated administrators who find a way to make the teachers' dreams reality.

This year ICE honors Brian Schultz and Marianne Fedak-Staberow for their outstanding contributions to their schools in the area of fostering technology integration.

In his role as a middle school teacher at Jenner Academy, a Cabrini Green Chicago Public School, Brian Schultz realized the importance of providing a learning environment that focused on the individual student's academic needs. He coupled this with a sincere desire to lessen the digital divide experienced by so many students of color and lower socioeconomic class, setting out to infuse technology throughout the curriculum, focusing on the individual needs of the students and creating a structure in which the students took responsibility for their own learning.

Recognizing the importance of immediate feedback for each of his students all of the time and building on Northwestern's web-based Collaboratory Project, Brian developed a mentor model in which students were allowed to pursue their own interests in writing while receiving individualized comments and support from Tennessee Tech University graduate students studying literacy.

Writing for an authentic audience fostered a sense of student pride in their work. Students were encouraged by the genuine interest in them and their writing expressed by their collaboratory mentor. One student's comment says it all – "I love my Collaboratory mentor! It is so great to have somebody help me get all the ideas out of my head and written down without my teacher's red pen on my paper."

In addition to the technology-rich language arts program, Brian also developed technology enriched math modules specific to the needs of each student. The students relished the idea that the work was

individualized and not graded. Students saw this unique class structure as a way for them to improve themselves.

Test scores were raised in both reading and math without the usual test preparation. In a math class in which none of the students were at grade level before coming to Brian's classroom, 47% achieved scores at or above the national norm. Thirty-five percent of students not testing at grade level prior to becoming a part of the writer's mentor project achieved reading scores above the national norm.

In addition to raising standardized test scores, Brian's students recorded an unprecedented 98% attendance rate.

Brian was nominated for this award by his principal, Mr. Joseph Gartner. In his nomination letter, Mr. Gartner stated that in his 30 years as an educator, he had never met a teacher who has had such a profound and lasting impact on students, teachers and administrators, this as a result of Brian's relentless fervor for leveraging technology as an effective tool for teaching and learning.



Marianne Fedak-Staberow serves as Director of Technology and Information Services for Villa Park District 45. With a strong belief in integrating technology into the learning process, Marianne has guided District 45's technology program for 10 years, gathering stakeholders from the community and the schools, obtaining grants and implementing a professional development model built on peer support. Under Marianne's direction teachers at just one of the six schools in District 45 have written over 40 successful grants in the last two years.

Through an in-district mini-grant initiative, teachers are encouraged to submit innovative technology projects that enliven the core curriculum. New classroom equipment is awarded on the basis of these mini-grants. This grant program in District 45 has helped create an exciting learning environment, fostering opportunities for collaboration and the creative use of technology in the classroom at all grade levels.

We are now accepting nominations for the 2006 Technology Educator of the Year Awards. Consider nominating and outstanding educator of this prestigious honor. For more information and to download an application, go to the ICE website (<http://www.iceberg.org>).

The availability of technology and the increase in teacher proficiency has resulted in a rethinking of the way District 45 administrators and teachers are building curriculum and differentiating instruction.

Marianne's efforts extend not only to her students and teachers but to the Villa Park community as well. The 4th graders at Ardmore School are working with the Villa Park Historical Society, building a children's historical perspective of their town.

Building on her students' and teachers' comfort level with technology, Marianne has instituted a series of family technology classes. Family classes are offered every week and rotate at schools throughout the District. Students and family members are encouraged to attend to share technology skills learned by the student that may well lead to better employment opportunities for the parent.

Amazingly, this program is staffed by those same teachers who just a few short years ago were scared to death of technology! In Marianne's words, it is amazing to see teachers become more proficient themselves and see themselves as leaders as they assume the role of teacher for these evening technology classes.

As their proficiency grows, Marianne is seeing her teachers use data to determine the highest priorities for their students. Not only is technology now being used to teach and learn, but also to help see pockets of student needs that were less obvious before.

ICE extends its sincere congratulations to both Brian and Marianne for their exemplary use of technology to enrich the lives of their students and the educational atmosphere of their schools.

ICE would like to recognize Faith Caron for her many years of service as the chairperson for the Technology Educator of the Year Awards. The success of this program is due primarily to her dedication and efforts. Thank you, Faith!

Manage the Information Superhighway with RSS

By Lucy Gray,
University of Chicago Lab School

Have you ever seen an orange button on a web page labeled RSS or XML? These icons let you know that it's possible to subscribe to news feeds from a web site. Using something called a news aggregator or news reader, you can monitor syndicated web site content that may be of interest to you. Without visiting additional web pages, you can read the headlines of your favorite newspaper, view the latest blog postings of other educators, and listen to a myriad of podcasts.

What is RSS?

RSS is changing the way people interact with the Internet. RSS is a "pull" technology in which information is transmitted to a user at his or her request. According to Wikipedia [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_\(protocol\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(protocol))], RSS can stand for three standards: Rich Site Summary (RSS 0.91), RDF Site Summary (RSS 0.9 and 1.0), and Real Simple Syndication (RSS 2.0). Regardless of its acronym, RSS was developed originally by Netscape and is a format for organizing and distributing the content of web sites. This technology is popular with those who maintain online journals called weblogs or blogs. News sites also offer this ability to subscribe to their content. Podcasts are available through RSS, and schools are increasingly using RSS technology to offer information, such as cafeteria menus, to their communities. You can expect to see more web sites flocking to this new way of disseminating information.

How does RSS work?

A web site publishes information in the form of an XML file, which then "feeds" content to news readers, also known as news aggregators. A newsreader can be software or a web site that allows the user to track these feeds. As feeds are added or updated, a newsreader will also keep track of these changes.

When a user views feeds in a newsreader such as NetNewsWire or Bloglines, they usually are able to see a headline and a brief summary of the feed content. They then can choose to view the full text by clicking on the hyperlinked headline.

Using a news aggregator can be a powerful method for managing the flow of information. The news aggregator compiles information in one place so that you can quickly browse

headlines. Think of it as a customized central repository for all the web page content that interests you.

Where can I find a newsreader?

Bloglines (<http://www.bloglines.com>) is one popular web based aggregator. The advantage of Bloglines is that you can access your account from any Internet connected computer. Bloglines also provides seamless integration with their free blogging service, the ability to share your newsfeed subscriptions with others, and a host of other useful features.

Another news aggregator just for Mac users is NetNewsWire (<http://ranchero.com/netnewswire>). NetNewsWire has a similar interface to Apple's Mail application and allows syncing between computers if the user has a .Mac account from Apple Computer.

Additionally, some web browsers act as newsreaders. In Apple's most recent version of OS X, Tiger, users will see a blue box entitled RSS in the address bar of the Safari web browser whenever they encounter a page containing RSS feeds. By clicking on this icon, users can add that particular feed to Safari or another newsreader of their choice. Mozilla's Firefox browser also supports RSS feeds with a feature called Live Links. A small orange icon appears in the bottom righthand corner of a Firefox window if there is a feed on a particular web page.

There are many other ones out there; you may want to try a few out to see which one best suits your preferences and needs.

How can one use RSS personally?

My aggregator of choice is NetNewsWire, and I have set up folders within the program according to different subject areas. If I receive several feeds from one source, such as the New York Times, I make a folder just for those feeds. In my *New York Times* folder, for instance, I receive feeds from David Pogue's tech columns, from the Circuits section of the paper, and from any education related articles.

Each morning, I scan my folders for any headlines that appeal to me. To do this, I click on a feed from a blog or news source and scan hyperlinked headlines in another pane. More detailed content appears in a third pane if I select a particular headline. If I'd like to see more or visit the actual web site, I also have the option of opening that linked headline in a web browser such as Internet

Explorer or Safari for further exploration. Each of my feeds also lists a count of recent unread postings. Monitoring this helps me tell at a glance if any source of information has new content.

With NetNewsWire, I can also share my subscriptions with other NetNewsWire users on a network. I can also export and import subscriptions as OPML files. For instance, I exchanged my exported subscriptions with a colleague who was new to RSS and wanted to see some interesting feeds. I exported the file, sent it to my colleague via email, and he was able to import all the feeds I had sent him into NetNewsWire.

Another unique sharing capability of using a newsreader is that one can also subscribe to feeds from social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and Furl. Thus, you can track what other web sites people are tracking. Photo sharing sites such as Flickr also allow for RSS feeds. Yahoo! Groups allows you to subscribe to feeds of some its groups. And finally, you can subscribe to Google searches by entering search parameters at Google News, obtaining the results, and selecting the RSS link on the left hand side of the page.

Using RSS and a news reader has proven to be an invaluable resource. I can efficiently keep up with current trends in educational technology, read the opinions of experts and nonexperts on just about any subject, and generally stay up to date with news of the world around me.

How can RSS be used in education?

Clearly, RSS is terrific for personal use; however, it is somewhat unclear if teachers are using this technology to transform classroom learning. In his article for TechLearning on the ABC's of RSS (<http://www.techlearning.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=163100414>), noted educational blogger Will Richardson describes three potential uses. He recommends using RSS to collect student "blogwork." Students write reflections for a course in their blogs. The teacher then subscribes to those blogs in a newsreader and can quickly and efficiently monitor and respond to their posts in one convenient location. Richardson also believes RSS can enhance research techniques. To get the latest news on a subject, students could set up an account in a newsreader such as Bloglines,

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Manage the Information Superhighway with RSS

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and create a newsfeed that would pull in any stories relating to that topic. And finally, he also recommends social bookmarking services, such as Furl, which allow one to “save, annotate, and share the best links that you can find on the Internet” via RSS.

Other Educators Are Saying...

Todd Slater, an Instructional Technology Educational Coordinator at Zane State College in Zanesville, OH offers the following advice: “My favorite reader is RSS Bandit (<http://www.rssbandit.org>). It’s a Windows-only app, but it’s the best reader I’ve seen on any platform. It has a powerful search feature, among other things. On Macs, I use BlogBridge (<http://www.blogbridge.com>), which is a cross-platform java app. It’s convenient in that it lets you sync your feeds across platforms, but I generally don’t care for the interface. I only use it on Macs because I can’t find any other free reader I like better. NetNewsWire Lite is pretty weak. On Linux there’s not much choice right now, but Liferea (<http://liferea.sourceforge.net>) is the best available.”

Slater also provides an example of a blog in which he, as the instructor, aggregated RSS feeds from his students’ blogs. It’s a great example of how the monitoring of student work can be easily set up with RSS and a blog (<http://blogs.zanestate.edu/planets/ids203>).

Kathryn Frech, a librarian at Seton Catholic Central High School in Binghamton, New York, uses Bloglines to track educational technology related news and subject-specific articles that she can forward to her colleagues, particularly in the areas of social studies and science. This is her list of favorite feeds:

Andy Carvin’s Waste of Bandwidth
<http://www.andycarvin.com>

Baby Boomer Librarian
<http://babyboomerlibrarian.blogspot.com>

Dave’s Blog
<http://daweed.blogspot.com>

Feel-Good Librarian
http://feelgoodlibrarian.typepad.com/feelgood_librarian

Librarian’s Index to the Internet
<http://lii.org>

Neat New Stuff
<http://www.marylaine.com/neatnew.html>

Tame the Web
<http://www.tametheweb.com/ttwblog>

Lynne Wolters, an assistant professor of Educational Technology at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon offers her blog as an example of what can be done with RSS: <http://www.cuonline.blog-city.com>.

Wolters says, “Many of the blogs I want to track are listed as news feeds on the right hand panel. The left hand panel contains bookmarks to web resources in alphabetized categories. In this way, my resources blog is also my newsreader. This blog becomes the primary source used by my student teachers. I also maintain an instructional blog for the particular course which contains documents and directions for course activities, assignments, etc. To keep up with other blogs not included in my ed tech resources blog, I use Blog Flux (<http://www.blogflux.com>), a directory of indexed blogs that also allows one to subscribe to blogs listed on the directory.”

Jay Morris, a teacher of English as an additional language at the International School of Amsterdam, uses Bloglines because of its favorable review in Wired magazine. He also recommends the following web tools for managing his workflow:

Blinkpro
<http://www.blinkpro.com/backpackit.com>

Gmail
<http://gmail.google.com>

Bloglines
<http://bloglines.com>

Morris says, “If I have a browser and a decent web connection, I have my basic productivity apps. And I don’t miss a beat when I change machines.”

Daniel Craig, of Indiana University, offers some of his favorite feeds, many of which are geared towards English as a Second Language teachers:

Blog-EFL
<http://blog-efl.blogspot.com>

EFL Geek
<http://eflgeek.com/index.php>

Dekita.org
<http://www.dekita.org>

Podcasting-Education
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Podcasting-Education>

TEFL Podcasting Forum
<http://teflpodcasts.blogspot.com>

The Daily Idiom
<http://box25.bluehost.com/%7Eenglishc/blogs>

ESLPod
<http://www.eslpod.com>

English Conversations
<http://www.e-poche.net/conversations>

The Bob and Rob Show
<http://box25.bluehost.com/~englishc/bobrob>

Breaking News English
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com>

OELA Newline
<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/newline>

Brainbubbles
<http://www.englishzee.com/podcast>

Craig also recommends RSS Popper (http://www.download.com/RSS-Popper/3000-9227_4-10371172.html) as a news aggregator; “It was free and integrates with Outlook. I go to Outlook 20 times a day anyway. It’s much more convenient for me than using an extra program or website to access my feeds.”

Craig Nansen, a technology coordinator for the Minot, North Dakota schools uses NetNewsWire and Bloglines to follow eSchoolNews Ed-Tech Insider (<http://www.eschoolnews.com/eti/index.php>) and Will Richardson’s blog, Weblogg-ed (<http://www.weblogg-ed.com>). Nansen also adds, “We publish our school calendar, school district blog, athletic calendars, hot lunch calendars, etc. with RSS. Teachers use RSS readers to monitor student blogs because they can just read recently posted items rather than checking all the student blogs when many may not have a new post there to read. I also follow others’ Furl sites and del.icio.us sites with RSS so that I know when they have bookmarked new sites.” You can subscribe to the feed of web sites bookmarked by Craig at http://www.furl.net/members/craig_nansen.

In Conclusion

All of this information may seem overwhelming to the average technology user, but try it and I guarantee you’ll like it. Start off by creating an account at Bloglines and experiment with subscribing to a news site or two. You will quickly discover the power of RSS and what it potentially can do for your students. RSS lets you customize the information you choose to receive; and as we all know, knowledge is power.

Tech 2005 – Telling the Story

By Jeff Doles, Barrington High School

We finally arrived in Springfield, after a mind-numbing four-hour drive from Barrington, our posteriors sore from the long ride, and in dire need of some stretching and a warm meal. Fortunately for us, we had the night to physically and mentally recover before we started to film the following day.

Tech 2005 is a prestigious not-for-profit initiative, supported by a broad range of education and business organizations. The program showcased the diverse and state-of-the-art technologies that are utilized in many of today's Illinois classrooms to promote authentic learning. The various projects incorporated interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum and the active involvement of students in their learning environment. Community partners provided design applications for students incorporating their technology to solve real world problems.

My students and I had found out several months earlier that we had been given the honor and privilege of being selected from a plethora of Illinois schools to film and document the event. The selection committee, headed by Jeff Morrison, awarded Barrington's Video Production program a grant to cover the expenses of room and board, supply needs and food.

However, the Tech 2005 event wasn't the only event scheduled during our long journey south. The night prior to covering the event we had a certain leisure encounter planned with The Darkside. Our caravan had arrived in Springfield the same day as the midnight showing of the new *Star Wars* movie. With our video crew being comprised of huge *Star Wars* fanatics and tech geeks, we had our hearts set on seeing the movie the night of its release. We soon found out that there was only one theatre in the nearby area that was showing the late night viewing of the movie. Unfortunately for us, it had been sold out for over a month. As a result, my resourceful, talented and creative students did

the next best thing. They created their own *Star Wars* movie in the hotel elevator. Please view the students' project at: http://bhs.cusd220.lake.k12.il.us/aa_folder/JeffDoles/starwarsexample.htm



Waking up sluggish from their late night struggles with the Evil Empire, it took several helpings of egg McMuffins to resurrect the students' energy and spirits. On this unusually hot and humid day, due to the popularity and scope of the event, our school van was parked a short hike away from the state capitol building. Immediately, we began transporting a substantial amount of equipment down the long straight road that led to the Capitol.

Once in the non-air conditioned building, we reviewed our storyboarded concept theme, scouted out the best shots for camera angles, and set up interviews to be filmed later in the

day. The students and I enjoyed talking with the diverse and talented students and teachers that had assembled to proudly display their work. The students' faces beamed with pride as they illustrated the key concepts of their project's technology software and the techniques they employed to create them. My students and I were also fortunate enough to personally meet and interview Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn.

After a long, sweltering, assiduous day of capturing all of the necessary footage for making the documentary, we wearily trudged back to the school van, our Tech 2005 shirts soaked through with the knowledge we had gained from the incredible experience.

Special thanks to Steve Yost, our school's audiovisual extraordinaire for coming with us on the trip and contributing his specialized video expertise to the project. Also, thank you to Bonnie Bjorkman, Paul Gillette and Principal, Dr. Tom Leonard for arranging the transportation, equipment and substitute teachers, and for allowing the students and me to experience such a hands-on and authentic learning experience. In addition, thank you to all the schools for sharing their technology applications that illustrated the fostering of increased student self-confidence, motivation to learn, creative abilities, and academic achievement.

Our final project documenting Tech 2005 may be viewed at <http://barringtonhighschool.org/Pictures/Tech2005/tech2005.asp>. For more information on the event and to apply to present at Tech 2006, please visit us at <http://www.springfieldtech2000.org>.

Jeff Doles is a National Board Certified Teacher at Barrington High School. You may view his Class Web Page at http://bhs.cusd220.lake.k12.il.us/aa_folder/JeffDoles/jdoles.asp.

Landmarks in Blogging and Podcasting: Navigating David Warlick's Websites

By Joe Brennan,
Niles Township High School District 219

I have always appreciated and used David Warlick's website for its practical resources and timely news about what's "out there" in cyberspace and how we educators might use those resources to better prepare our students for their future. David calls it "a Web site that is dedicated to the idea that the very nature of information is changing, practically before our eyes." I would like to highlight the parts of his sites that deal with the theme of this issue of the ICE Cube, Blogging (web logging) and Podcasting (an audio blog or radio type broadcast, if you will, that has been recorded and saved) in Education. With David's permission, we are reprinting pertinent sections of his websites in this article. I hope that you will both look into and listen in on what David has to "say" at <http://landmark-project.com> and <http://www.davidwarlick.com>, and be sure to catch him at the 2006 Illinois Technology Conference for Educators; David he will be our Friday, March 3rd keynote speaker.

Exactly 2¢ Worth Blog

Here's what David has to say about his own blog along with two recent entries:



For years, I have closed many of my opinionated posts to mailing lists with the term, "Exactly 2¢ Worth." When I decided to create a blog, it seemed like an appropriate name. So "Exactly 2¢ Worth" was born.

I post, on the average, three articles a week, though it depends on whether I am on the road or not. The topics range wildly from insights and rants about the structure of our education system to personal observations about my own children, who are now entering college and finishing up the last years of high school.

It's all about our society's efforts to prepare its children for the future, and as a result, shape our own future. This is important, and I care a great deal about it.

From a recent entry...

Last night I had a wholly unique experience. I was interviewed at a talk radio station, one with a giant picture of Rush Limbaugh on the

wall. The show was called Viewpoints, and the first sentence was, "Why should we be bringing technology into our classrooms, when our kids aren't learning the basics?" But by the third sentence, it was clear that everyone was on the same page, in terms of preparing our children for their future. It was an entirely enjoyable experience.

I did end out with a note pad of points that I wanted to insert into the conversation, but never got around to. 50 minutes can go by really fast.

1. Kids don't really need us to be getting experience with technology. They're getting that on their own. They are learning to play the technology. They need us to help them learn to work the technology.
2. "The future is here. It's just unevenly distributed." William Gibson
3. The challenge with overwhelming information is not, how do I manage all of this information?" The challenge is "How do I get my message through the storm of all of this information?"
4. In the entire day of staff development, here in Carteret County, we almost never used the term technology. It was always information, communication, processing, analyzing, expressing ideas, broadcasting. Technology was in the conversation, but no more than we would mention words like pencil or paper.

And an entry from the day before, My Blogworld as a Social Cell...

Sitting here in the Charlotte Airport, a conversation from the Duke CE Roundtable returned to me, as I plan for this week's presentations about the Read/Write Web. Again, most of the attendees of that event were corporate educators with a handful of higher ed folks and me. Several of the corporate folks were struggling with ways of using technology to provide professional development, and someone said, "These people will not join one more portal!"

At this statement, it suddenly occurred to me an important difference between the traditional web (can't help but smile at that)

and web2.0. Online communities, as powerful as they are for facilitating collaboration and knowledge building, suffer one important limitation. They have borders. Portals are often designed as closed environments with walls that prevent outsiders from coming in. Even the original collaborative tool, the mailing list (listserv), is a closed environment in that there is a gatekeeper who has to let you in, even if it is a software-based subscription.

The Blogosphere does not have this limitation. As we write and read blogs, subscribe via RSS to the blogs we want to pay attention to, read and respond to their postings, and have our postings and comments responded to, what forms is a social cell of idea exchange and building and personality sharing. Factor in the social bookmarks, and news feeds, and we find ourselves in side of a rich social community of people who have similar interests, or interests and perspectives that we find valuable to our goals.

Significantly different from portals and mailing lists is the fact that cell forms almost organically. Back in December 2005, I subscribed (my first use of RSS) to three webloggers – people who I knew could help me to understand this new information environment. They talked about the ideas of other bloggers, with links to their sites, and I added new people to my aggregator. After a while some of them dropped of, and others were added as they got mentioned in my readings. My aggregator does not merely grow, it undulates. It gets larger, then it shrinks. It intersects with other people's cells for a while as their ideas help me do my job, and then we disconnect, and my cell heads out into other directions.

Right now, it is fairly small, because I have so little time to read. But when I get a couple of these programming jobs out of the way, I have two or three topics that I will go to Technorati with, find people who are talking about them, and then grow my network – and learn.

Bottom line is that my online network is now organic. It evolves as my needs change, and how I process the ideas inside of my cell, affects other people and how their cells evolve.

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Landmarks in Blogging and Podcasting: Navigating David Warlick's Websites

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Does this make any sense?

David Warlick on Podcasting...

There is not much to print about his podcasts because they should be heard.

A podcast is an audio blog. It serves very much the same purpose as a blog, except that it is performed as an audio presentation rather than text and image. There is very little difference between the content of my 20 Worth and Connect Learning, only in the medium and the fact that some people would rather listen than read.

My podcasts are typically 15 minutes to a half hour and include tips for teaching in information rich schools, why we should be teaching in information-rich schools, stories

that related to our challenges as 21st century educators, and a rant here and there.

Mostly it's a lot of fun making these things, and podcasting is simply another compelling way for us (educators, learning, and citizens of the 21st century) can express what we know, believe, feel, and hope for.

Central to my focus in integrating technology into what and how children learn is information and communication. Information has changed dramatically in the past ten years, and so too have the ways that we communicate. One of the most interesting new developments in communication is the Podcast. Podcasting is conceptually an overlapping of radio and blogging, an audio blog. There are technologies that link the practice to the iPod as the ultimate player for Podcast programs, but there is nothing about this brand new communication outlet that can't be done on other computers and media players.

Podcasting Report on WB22

I was recently interviewed by WB22 News, a local TV station, about producing podcasts. Here is the interview. By the end of the interview, I was asking Ric Swiner questions about being a journalist, and his answers were included in one of my podcast programs. Come listen to Connect Learning (<http://davidwarlick.com/connectlearning>), my regular podcast station.

Author's note: Both Mac and PC users can use Apple's free iTunes program to listen to podcasts. From iTunes go to the "Music Store" in the "Source" column on the left. In the "Inside the Music Store" column on the next screen that appears, click on the "Podcasts" text. Scroll down to near the bottom to see the "Categories" column which even includes an "Education" section.

Blog Out Bullying!

By Nancy L. Nymark,
University of Phoenix Faculty,
Technology Coordinator, Ss. Peter
& Paul School, Naperville, Illinois


Bullying is a very sensitive and prevalent problem in schools today, and there are many strategies that can be used to minimize its effects. Education and communication are the keys to alerting students about unacceptable behavior and providing strategies for handling bully situations. Blogging is a wonderful way to give students a voice by allowing them to journal and discuss how to handle themselves, report incidents, and share their worries.

A teacher can set up a blog site so students can communicate with each other in an interactive forum. However, privacy and security are concerns of both schools and parents, so researching an online site that meets these criteria is essential. Some suggestions include www.livejournal.com and Yahoo groups, both of which are free sites that allow users to limit who has access to the sites.

Blogging can allow students to remain anonymous to each other, and this gives them the courage to speak their minds and not feel stupid or "nerdy" in their responses. However, teachers should maintain control by having a list of user names to prevent the users from entering inappropriate material. In addition, students should be cautioned against sharing personal information that must remain private.

Teachers should also provide guidelines and structure to the online journaling by posting questions and/or statements for student reaction and comment. This retains the focus of the blog site and keeps the conversations flowing. Judicious monitoring is also a necessary element if the site is to be successful. Some examples for anti-bullying would be:

- I would like to report the following bullying situation, and this is how I handled it.
- I need help with the following situation.
- An example of positive behavior would be...

- 
- An example of bullying would be...
 - I feel good when someone...
 - I can be a better person by...
 - I dislike it when someone is unkind by...
 - I can help others who are bully victims by....
 - I can prevent myself from being bullied by...

As the conversations unfold, more questions and/or comments can be posted to address issues and help students. The teacher can then use discussion information to hold "live" classroom discussions to pinpoint problem situations.

Blogging is a terrific communication tool if used properly and provides a new venue for students and teachers alike. It can be used to convey thoughts and ideas and help students expand their thinking skills and solve problems.

Bits and Bytes from ICE and Beyond



2nd Annual ICE Classroom Video Contest

We are now accepting submissions for the 2006 ICE Classroom Video Contest. The purpose of this program is to recognize Illinois teachers and their students for outstanding use of video media to effectively support teaching and learning in grades K-8. The contest will be judged by high school students throughout the state. Space for judges is limited. If you are interested in having your high school students act as judges for the contest, please contact Joe Brennan at joebre@niles-hs.k12.il.us. NOTE: Teachers whose students participate in the judging of this contest will receive a free 1-day registration to the conference. (One [1] teacher per classroom of judges.)

Video submissions must support curricular goals and Illinois Learning Standards. Students must have participated in some aspect of the video in order for it to be a valid submission (i.e., filming, editing, script writing, set design, etc.). A release will be required for every student that appears in the video. All projects are subject to publication on the ICE and Apple websites and/or in their respective hard copy circulations.

Winning teachers and their participating students will:

1. be recognized during the opening session at the Illinois Technology Conference for Educators (IL-TCE) 2006;
2. receive classroom resources, including Director in the Classroom and a FREE subscription to unitedstreaming.com;
3. receive a digital camera for the classroom;
4. be presented with a plaque of recognition from Illinois Computing Educators.

For more information and to download an application form, please visit the ICE website (<http://www.iceberg.org>).



Now available! *Linking for Learning and Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners*

Linking for Learning: The Illinois School Library Media Program Guidelines is an accessible, current, working tool that connects school library media programs to information literacy and the Illinois Learning Standards. It focuses on the integration of information and technology into learning and provides an implementation framework which emphasizes planning and assessment.

Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners is the full 200 page report of the Illinois-specific statistical support for the improvement of school libraries.

Both of these documents can help administrators, school boards, other teachers and the community understand the importance of and the need for improvement of school library programs. They are available from ISLMA at <http://www.islma.org>.



Free GIS & GPS Conference + CPDUs for Teachers

The Illinois GIS Association is happy to announce a free half-day workshop offered to teachers in the K-12 classrooms and college students who are in an educational program to learn about GIS & GPS and how these technologies can be incorporated into the classroom. The event is being held at the Oak Brook Marriott in Oak Brook, IL on Monday, November 14, 2005, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Seating is limited, so sign up today! Due to space limitations, this is NOT open to K - 12 classroom students. For more information and to register, visit us at <http://www.gis2gps.com>.

GIS and GPS are Coming to Illinois Schools

It is just a matter of time before these tools are commonplace with students. Find out more about these tools at the November ILGISA conference. The topics will include:

GPS – A Powerful Hands-On Tool for Students in the 21st Century

Discover the rapidly development of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) as a new and essential tool for student learning in the 21st Century. Learn how this technology provides students with a powerful tool for exploring everything from the world to their backyard. See the power of mapping GPS data as a tool for students to investigate the world around them.

GIS – One of the Best Kept Secrets in Technology for the 21st Century

Discover the rapidly growing benefits of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as a new and essential tool for student learning in the 21st Century. GIS engages students in active hands-on learning, foster critical thinking, involve students in investigations of relevant real-issues, employ problem based learning, and advance the technology literacy, goals of the educational community.

Presented by: Ed Gorny, Nancy Gorny, Denny Kazelas, and Glenn Polloway with the "GIS2GPS Team" located on the web at <http://www.gis2gps.com>.



Atomic Learning – FREE to ICE Members

Did you know that as an ICE member you are given FREE access to the Atomic Learning library? Visit them at <http://www.atomiclearning.com>. The password changes every month. If you are not receiving the monthly password via email, please contact us at info@iceberg.org, and we will be sure to put you on the email list.



Illinois Computing Educators
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Call for Articles

The theme for the next issue of the ICE CUBE is *Igniting Student Achievement*. This special edition of the newsletter will focus on the **2006 Illinois Technology Conference for Educators: Igniting Student Achievement**. Hear from upcoming and past presenters on how they "ignite student achievement". Please consider sharing your experiences and expertise for the next ICE CUBE. The deadline for submission is December 15, 2005, and the scheduled publication date is January 2006. E-mail your submissions to Beth Burke (bburke@iceberg.org). We can't wait to hear from you!

2006 ICE CUBE Timeline

<u>Volume 2006</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Article Due Date</u>
Issue Number 1	<i>Igniting Student Achievement</i>	December 15, 2005
Issue Number 2	<i>Best Practices in Professional Development</i>	March 15, 2006
Issue Number 3	<i>Annual Theme: Technology Integrated Lesson Plans</i>	June 15, 2006
Issue Number 4	<i>TBD: Please send in your theme ideas</i>	September 15, 2006