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About INFOBITS

Infobits is an electronic service of the Institute for Academic Technology's Information Resources Group. Each month we monitor and select from a number of information technology and instruction technology sources that come to our attention and provide brief notes for electronic dissemination to educators.

NEW WEB SITE FOR THE DISABLED

The *Assistive Technology Web Report* is a new, independent Web newsletter that reports on current events related to the area of assistive technology, and provides informational links to AT-related online resources, organizations, regional centers, publications, vendors, and conferences. This publication grew out of an extensive update of "Assistive Technology for the Disabled Computer User," one of the IAT's more popular Information Resource Guides, authored by former communications intern Linda Wilson.

Assistive Technology Web Report and its site are managed and maintained by former IAT publications coordinator Jon Pishney, email: jon_pishney@unc.edu. Visit the AT Web Report at http://projects.iat.unc.edu/atwr/ For access to the "Assistive Technology for the Disabled Computer User" resource guide, link to http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-20.html

USING THE WEB TO EXTEND AND ENHANCE TEXTBOOKS

This fall Simon & Schuster made 18 of its higher education textbooks available on the Web with customized links to new material, images, self-quizzes, software, databases, case studies, and other resources. While Web editions may not yet entirely replace a traditional textbook in a course, their existence does raise questions for faculty selecting texts for their courses. With textbook costs a major expense for students, should faculty consider this when deciding between print and online textbooks? Do the add-ons provided by the online textbooks strengthen the case for selecting what might otherwise be a weak textbook choice? Or do they make a case for requiring students to use two textbooks, the printed and the online? Should faculty rely on the online textbook's Web pages to provide supplementary materials or spend the time devising their own collections of Web resources that might be more customized for their students? Visit the site at http://www.prenhall.com/pubguide/and decide for yourself.

For information on other publishers' plans to use technology to enhance their textbooks, see "More Publishers Use Technology to Add Features to Textbooks," by Thomas J. Deloughry, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. XLIII, no. 16, December 13, 1996, pp. A25-A26.

FULL-TEXT JOURNALS ONLINE: A CAUTIONARY STUDY

As more publishers set up links to their journals on the Web and make full-text online databases available, we are tantalized with the idea that soon we can toss our cumbersome collections of magazines and, with a few clicks, be reading the articles online. Before you cancel your print subscriptions, however, you may want to read the findings of a study conducted by librarians Anna Grzeszkiewicz and A. Craig Hawbaker. They examined 130 journals that claimed to be full-text recreations of their print versions. The results of their study were not encouraging. Of the 130 journals, several had only abstracts available, although at one time they were listed as having full texts of their articles. Of those journals that had full articles, many made a distinction between "full text" and "full coverage," meaning that while all the online articles were complete, not all the articles in an issue were actually available online. The researchers also discovered other problems: "missing articles, missing issues, inconsistent format availability, incorrect citations, questionable editorial decisions, and typographical errors." Although the sample studied was limited, the researchers concluded that librarians and users should be aware that total reliance on electronic versions of journals is not a satisfactory option. Print copies or document delivery services may still be needed to augment and correct problems associated with the electronic editions.

For an article on the study, see: Grzeszkiewicz, Anna, and A. Craig Hawbaker. "Investigating a Full-Text Journal Database: A Case of Detection." *Database*, vol. 19, no. 6, December 1996, pp. 59-62.

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Database [ISSN 0162-4105] is published six times a year by Online, Inc., 462 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897-2126 USA; tel: 203-761-1466; Web: http://www.onlineinc.com/database
Subscriptions are $110/year (U.S. and Canada); $132/year (Mexico); $145/year (other countries/airmail).

BALKANIZATION OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

As we focus on Internet communities centered around common interests, what happens in our own geographic backyards? In "Could the Internet Balkanize Science?" (*Science*, vol. 274, no. 5292, November 29, 1996, pp. 1479-1480), Marshall Van Alstyne and Erik Brynjolfsson express their concern that the explosion of networked information and time constraints require that scientists focus on specific interests and filter out extraneous material. This can result in also filtering out contact with faculty and graduate students on their own campuses, thus closing off potentially valuable sources of information sharing. A copy of the article is available on the Web (and viewable by non-subscribers until January 6, 1997) at http://www.sciencemag.org/science/scripts/display/full/274/5292/1479.html

Science [ISSN 0036-8075] is published 51 times a year by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Subscriptions are available to AAAS members for $12 above their membership dues. For non-member subscription information see http://www.aaas.org/membership/mem-app.htm

BETTER STUDENTS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY?

"The Role of Online Communications in Schools: A National Study" is a report of a study conducted by CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology), an independent research and development organization, and sponsored by

the Scholastic Network and Council of the Great City Schools. By isolating the impact of online use and measuring its effect on student learning in the classroom, the study endeavored to demonstrate that students with online access perform better. The study compared the work of 500 students in fourth-grade and sixth-grade classes in seven urban school districts (Chicago, Dayton, Detroit, Memphis, Miami, Oakland, and Washington, DC) with and without online access. According to the report, the results "show significantly higher scores on measurements of information management, communication, and presentation of ideas for experimental groups with online access than for control groups with no online access. It offers evidence that using Scholastic Network and the Internet can help students become independent, critical thinkers, able to find information, organize and evaluate it, and then effectively express their new knowledge and ideas in compelling ways." To view the complete report, link to http://www.cast.org/stsstudy.html

CAST is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1984, whose mission is to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities through innovative computer technology through research and product development. For more information, contact CAST, 39 Cross Street, Peabody, MA 01960 USA; tel: 508-531-8555; TTY: 508-538-3110; fax: 508-531-0192; email: cast@cast.org; Web: http://www.cast.org/

KIDS NEWSLETTER

KIDS: Kids Identifying And Discovering Sites is a new Web publication supported by the InterNIC Net Scout project and produced by K-12 students as a resource for other K-12 students. KIDS is an ongoing, cooperative effort of two classrooms in the Madison Metropolitan School District in Wisconsin, and two classrooms in the Boulder Valley School District in Colorado. While teachers assist and provide support, the students select and annotate all resources included in every issue of KIDS. The newsletter is located at http://rs.internic.net/scout/KIDS/index.html

InterNIC Net Scout, located at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, supports other projects to help educators and students make better use of the Web:

The Scout Report is a weekly newsletter of new and newly discovered Internet resources and network tools, available by email or on the Web at http://rs.internic.net/scout/report/index.html

Net-happenings is a service moderated by Gleason Sackman that distributes daily announcements of Internet resources by email and on the Web at http://www.mid.net:80/NET/

The Scout Toolkit v2.0 is designed to provide more summaries, analyses, and insights about current and future network tools. It also provides practical tips and tools for using Internet search engines more effectively, and is available on the Web at http://rs.internic.net/scout/toolkit/index.html

For more information on InterNIC Net Scout services, email: scout@internic.net; Web: http://rs.internic.net/scout/

CRITICAL THINKING TUTORIAL

Mission: Critical is an interactive tutorial for critical thinking designed by Professor David Mesher, who has been teaching critical thinking at San Jose State University since 1988. The tutorial introduces the basic concepts of critical thinking through sets of instructions and exercises. The exercises can be used with almost any critical thinking textbook, simply by following that text's order when choosing the independent subject modules from the Mission: Critical's main menu. Link to Mission: Critical at http://arachne.sjsu.edu/depts/itl/index.html

For more information, contact David Mesher, Associate Professor, English Department, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192-0090 USA; tel: 408-924-4440; fax:408-924-4580; email: mesher@email.sjsu.edu

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WARS ON THE WEB

"Civil War Women: Primary Sources on the Internet" is taken from the bibliography of the "Women and the Civil War" manuscript resources in the Special Collections Library at Duke University. In response to the many requests from students and teachers who wanted Internet access to primary sources on this topic, Duke library staff have begun to transcribe and scan some of their manuscript collections that document women's experiences in the Civil War. Although there is a wealth of information about the Civil War already on the Internet, there is a relatively small amount of material that reflects women's lives and experiences during this time period. This Web site includes women's diaries, letters, and other documents, as well as photographs and prints from the period.

The online collection is available at http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/cwdocs.html/The complete bibliography of the manuscripts is at http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/civilwar.html For more information, contact: Ginny Daley, Women's Studies Archivist & Bibliographer, Special Collections Library, 103 Perkins Library, Box 90185, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708 USA; tel: 919-660-5828: fax: 919-684-2855; email: vld@mail.lib.duke.edu

"Trenches on the Web" provides extensive links to online resources covering World War I: photograph and poster archives, maps, descriptions of weapons, biographies, songs, timelines, etc. The site was developed and is maintained by WWI enthusiast Mike Iavarone, Assistant Vice President, Information Technology Solutions, First Chicago NBD Corporation, Chicago, IL 60670 USA; email: mikei@mcs.com; Web: http://www.mcs.com/~mikei/home/home.htm

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LIBRARIAN'S LINKS

The following IAT Information Resource Guides were recently updated:

"Assessments of Multimedia Technology in Education: Bibliography"
http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-11.html

"Computers and Copyrights: Bibliography"
http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-04.html

"Searching the World Wide Web"
http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-08.html

To access a list of the documents in the Information Resource Guides series, link to
http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/guides.html

URL: http://www.unc.edu/cit/infobits/bitdec96.html
Infobits editor: Carolyn Kotlas

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