

IAT INFOBITS

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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.

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TECHNICAL SUPPORT GAP GROWS ON CAMPUSES

A study by the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) found that the "rapid advance of technology, the rise of the Internet, and the overall growth of the economy has created severe problems for companies seeking skilled information technology (IT) worker(s)." A series of recent articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* provide evidence that academe is also facing similar shortages. And the problems of recruiting and retaining top-notch technical support staff are even more formidable when colleges and universities cannot offer salaries that are competitive with private industry.

The increasing expectation that faculty will incorporate new technologies into their teaching has also contributed to stretching the resources on many campuses. "Administrators have encouraged -- and in some cases required -- faculty members to create and maintain Web pages, start electronic-mail lists, and take advantage of high-tech language labs." When this increased demand is not matched by increased support staffing, faculty's enthusiasm and commitment may dissolve. "If colleges don't beef up their technical staffs, some worry, professors may just decide to stick with chalkboards and transparencies -- no matter how much money has been spent on machines and software" ("As Use of Computers Surges, Colleges Scramble to Provide Technical Support" by Lisa Guernsey and Jeffrey R. Young, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9/5/97, p. A35).

There is no universal solution to this situation. Some institutions are training corps of student technology consultants to augment the overextended support staff and using new student technology fees to pay for the programs ("William Paterson U. Trains Students to Be Its Technology Consultants" by Lisa Guernsey, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9/5/97, p. A36). Others are filling the gaps with temporary, more-costly consultants. Still others are ramping up their recruiting efforts using the argument that the "quality of life" for workers in academe can offset the lower salaries offered. However, this tactic may be losing force as support staff workloads continue to increase while the work environment becomes less attractive ("Colleges Complain They Can't Hire -- or Keep -- Enough Computer Specialists" by Jeffrey R. Young, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9/5/97, pp. A36-A37 and "The Start of the Fall Semester Is Crunch Time for Computing Staffs" by Jeffrey Selingo, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9/26/97, pp. A27-A28). Regardless of what colleges try, it appears that there is little relief in sight as the demands of users and rapidly changing technologies increase and the supply of qualified support staff willing to work in academic settings dwindles.

A summary of the ITAA report is available on the Web at <http://www.ita.org/itworksu.htm>

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<http://chronicle.merit.edu/>

Annual subscriptions are \$75 (U.S.), \$123.05 (Canada), \$150 (all other countries). Articles cited are also available to subscribers through the Chronicle's *Academe Today* online service. Check with your library to find out if your campus provides electronic access to Chronicle articles.

INTERNET SCOUT PROJECT ANNOUNCES NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Internet Scout Project of the Computer Sciences Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison announced three new subject-specific Scout Reports for higher education: "Science & Engineering," "Social Science," and "Business and Economics." Reports will be compiled by librarians and content specialists and published every two weeks via email and on the Web. These new reports will expand the Internet Scout Project's existing current awareness and expand the content of the Scout Report Signpost, a database of selected Internet resources, to include highly specialized resources.

To read the Subject Specific Scout Reports on the Web go to the main Scout Report site at

<http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/scout/report/index.html>

To subscribe to the email versions of the Reports, send email to: scoutlst@cs.wisc.edu and in the body of the message type **subscribe srscieng**, or **subscribe srsocsci**, or **subscribe srbusecon**, or all three, depending on the publications you wish to receive. More than one command can be sent in a single email to scoutlst.

For more information contact Jack Solock, Editor, *Scout Report* and Subject Specific Scout Reports; tel: 608-262-6606; email: jacks@cs.wisc.edu

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS RECOGNIZED

The Educom Medal Awards Program recognizes outstanding educators, professionals, and other individuals who have significantly demonstrated that information technology can improve the undergraduate learning experience. Winners are selected by Educom partner societies; partner societies for the 1997 program include the American Philosophical Association (APA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), and the Geological Society of America (GSA). Information about the program and this year's winners is available on Educom's Web site at <http://www.educom.edu/web/medal/medalHome.html>

American Political Science Association nominee:

Dr. Jerry Goldman (email: j-goldman@nwu.edu) is a professor of political science at Northwestern University. Among his contributions to teaching American government and politics is the Web site "Oyez Oyez Oyez: A Supreme Court WWW Resource," which provides information about major constitutional cases heard and decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The site includes audio recordings of the Court's proceedings. Oyez is on the Web at <http://oyez.at.nwu.edu/oyez.html>

American Society of Mechanical Engineers nominees:

Dr. Dawn Tilbury (email: tilbury@umich.edu) is an assistant professor of mechanical engineering and applied mechanics at the University of Michigan and Dr. William C. Messner (email: bmessner@andrew.cmu.edu) is an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. Their Web-based tutorial for teaching the use of MATLAB for control system analysis enables students to design practical industrial control systems. The tutorial is on World Wide Web, making it available both to students and to working professionals who need a refresher in the use of MATLAB. Controls Tutorials for MATLAB is on the Web at <http://www.engin.umich.edu/group/ctm/>

American Philosophical Association nominees:

Dr. Jon Barwise (email: barwise@phil.indiana.edu) is a College of Arts and Sciences professor of philosophy, mathematics, and computer science at Indiana University and Dr. John Etchemendy (email: etch@csl.stanford.edu) is

a professor of philosophy and symbolic systems and chairman of the Commission on Technology in Teaching and Learning at Stanford University. They are credited with leadership of development teams working on three computer programs that have advanced the teaching of formal logic. The award-winning packages -- *Hyperproof*, *The Language of First-order Logic*; *Tarski's World*; and *Turing's World* -- are all published by the Center for the Study of Language and Information and distributed by Cambridge University Press. For more information link to <http://csli-www.stanford.edu/hp/index.html>

Geological Society of America nominee:

Dr. Michelle N. Lamberson (email: mlambers@eos.ubc.ca) is educational technology coordinator in the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of British Columbia. The site she developed for the department includes course Web sites, interactive learning modules, exercises, discipline-specific databases, and developer tools. The materials are on the Web at <http://www.science.ubc.ca/~eoswr/>

More information on Educom and its programs and publications can be found at <http://www.educom.edu/>

Academe isn't the only arena where information technology accomplishments are being recognized. *InformationWeek* magazine announced its choices for the 500 most innovative IT organizations in the private sector. Among the twenty industries spotlighted are health care, manufacturing, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and financial services. Articles about the *InformationWeek* 500 are available in Issue 649, September 22, 1997 of *InformationWeek* and online at <http://techweb.cmp.com:80/iw/649/500menu.htm>

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ONLINE RESOURCES FOR LISTSERV MODERATORS

Email discussion lists (listservs) continue to be a major tool that professors use to extend and enhance their teaching activities. Unfortunately, listserv moderation includes time-consuming management chores that can discourage some faculty from offering online discussions to their repertoire. Mauri Collins (Northern Arizona University) and Zane L. Berge (University of Maryland Baltimore County) have created "The Moderators Homepage: Resources for Moderators and Facilitators of Online Discussion," a Web site designed to support "moderators and moderators-to-be of online discussion in both academic and non-academic settings." The site contains links to guides for starting and managing listservs, samples of editorial policies, netiquette guides, and articles on the role of the moderator in online discussions. The Moderator's Homepage is located at <http://star.ucc.nau.edu/~mauri/moderators.html>

Berge and Collins are also editors of the three-volume work (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1995) on computer-mediated communications in education:

Volume 1: *Computer-Mediated Communication and the Online Classroom. Overview and Perspectives*
<http://star.ucc.nau.edu/~mauri/ham1.html>

Volume 2: *Computer-Mediated Communication and the Online Classroom in Higher Education*
<http://star.ucc.nau.edu/~mauri/ham2.html>

Volume 3: *Computer-Mediated Communication and the Online Classroom in Distance Learning*
<http://star.ucc.nau.edu/~mauri/ham3.html>

ELECTRONIC JOURNAL ON ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

"You can't read it on the train, or make notes in the margin. You can't tear out an article to put in your files. You have to buy an expensive machine, learn a confusing interface, and master a cranky connection even to open it up. So why does anyone publish a scholarly peer-reviewed journal electronically?" asks Judith A. Turner, editor of *The Journal of Electronic Publishing (JEP)*. Find the answer to this question in the latest issue of *JEP*, which looks at eight electronic journals and what they have to offer beyond print journals. Journals featured include the Association for Computing

Machinery's *Journal of Experimental Algorithmics*; *Public-Access Computer Systems Review*; *Earth Interactions* (a joint publication of the American Geophysical Union, American Meteorological Society, and the Association of American Geographers); *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*; and *RSNA EJ* (from the Radiological Society of North America).

The Journal of Electronic Publishing [ISSN 1080-2711] is published free of charge on the Web by the University of Michigan, 839 Greene Street, P.O. Box 1104, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1104 USA. For more information contact JEP; tel: 313-764-4388; fax: 313-936-0456; email: jep-info@umich.edu; Web: <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/>

MULTIMEDIA AUTHORING SYSTEMS EVALUATED

PC Week Labs (part of *PC Week* magazine), in conjunction with their corporate partner, Wisconsin Technical College System Labs, recently invited vendors of multimedia courseware authoring systems to participate in a "Labs On Site" evaluation. Each participating vendor was asked to create a training module that could be used to provide computer-based training over the Internet or a corporate intranet. The systems were judged in the areas of quality of vendor's customer support, how well the systems handled course design and administration, and how well the finished product delivered an effective learning experience over the Internet. The winning vendor was WBT Systems' *TopClass*, followed by Lotus Development Corp.'s *LearningSpace* and Macromedia's *Authorware*.

Articles about the evaluations and a chart comparing the eight products examined can be found on *PC Week's* Web site at <http://www.zdnet.com/pcweek/reviews/ibt.html>

More information on the top products is also available on the Web.

TopClass: <http://www.wbtsystems.com/index.html>

LearningSpace: <http://www2.lotus.com/education/learningspace.nsf>

Authorware: <http://www.macromedia.com/software/authorware/>

LIBRARIAN'S LINKS

In conjunction with a Web site that the IAT created for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Department of Romance Languages, we have three new documents in the Information Resource Guides series:

"Spanish Language Resources on the Internet: Selected Sites"

<http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-53.html>

"Portuguese Language Resources on the Internet: Selected Sites"

<http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-52.html>

"Catalan Language Resources on the Internet: Selected Sites"

<http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-54.html>

URL: <http://www.unc.edu/cit/infobits/bitsep97.html>

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