

CIT Infobits

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About INFOBITS

Infobits is an electronic service of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ITS Teaching and Learning's Center for Instructional Technology. Each month the CIT's Information Resources Consultant monitors and selects from a number of information and instructional technology sources that come to her attention and provides brief notes for electronic dissemination to educators.

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WHAT DO STUDENTS IN DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS NEED?

"Students in a distance learning environment often find themselves in new educational surroundings supported by unfamiliar technologies. As they adjust to this learning environment, they may rely on available people and tools for support, as well as changing their own living and learning patterns. By talking with students who have already begun this adjustment process, can we discover what they have found to be the most helpful ways of coping? By discovering these means of coping, can we as faculty and administrators learn how to advise new distance learning students, as well as how to structure programs and classes to meet the needs of these students?"

In "Coping in a Distance Environment: Sitcoms, Chocolate Cake, and Dinner with a Friend" [*First Monday*, vol. 5, no. 9, September 4, 2000], Michelle M. Kazmer (doctoral student in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) reports on a study that sought to answer these questions.

Some of the study's findings indicate that for distance learning courses "students need to know many things as far in advance as possible: they need course syllabi several weeks before the class begins; they need technology training long enough before they have to use the technology that they have time to become proficient; and incoming students need to know before they begin the program what expectations about workloads and goals are realistic." All involved (students, instructors, and administrators) need to use technology to bring students together socially and intellectually, making them feel more a part of a class experience and a learning community.

The article is available online at http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue5_9/kazmer/index.html

First Monday [ISSN: 1396-0466] is an online, peer-reviewed journal whose aim is to publish original articles about the Internet and the global information infrastructure. It is published in cooperation with the University Library, University of Illinois at Chicago. For more information, contact: First Monday, c/o

WHAT DO INSTRUCTORS IN DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS NEED?

In their annual meeting in July, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) proposed some core standards for distance learning programs in higher education. The standards addressed faculty concerns with compensation, training and technical support, intellectual property rights, and access to library resources. Student needs were also addressed in the proposed standards. Later this fall, AFT will release a detailed report, entitled *Guidelines for Good Practice in Distance Education*, a detailed report on these standards. This report will be updated annually. For a preview of the standards link to <http://www.aft.org/press/2000/0706a00.php>

Founded in 1916, the AFT is a union representing teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education faculty and staff, public employees, and nurses and other health care professionals. For more information, contact: American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001 USA; tel: 202-879-4400; email: online@aft.org; Web: <http://www.aft.org/>

TIPS FOR TEACHING ONLINE GROUPS

147 Practical Tips for Teaching Online Groups: Essentials of Web-Based Education, by Donald E. Hanna, Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, and Simone Conceicao-Runlee [Overland Park, KS: Atwood Publishing, 2000. ISBN: 189185934X, \$12.50 US], is a "how-to guide for college professors, schoolteachers, and workplace educators." Drawing upon their extensive experience in educational communications and instructional design and technology, the authors "describe the reasonable expectations that professors should have of their students; copyright issues that pertain to course content; ways of interacting with students, like bulletin boards and shared documents; and methods of evaluating students online, including portfolios and peer assessments." They also debunk some myths of online teaching regarding time requirements, number of students an instructor can handle, and the reliability of the technology. A review of the book is available online at <http://chronicle.com/teaching/books/2000091101b.htm>

ENGLISH DOMINATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Distance education programs and the growth of the Internet are contributing to a trend towards English as the lingua franca of higher education and science. In "The New Latin: English Dominates in Academe" [*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 8, 2000, <http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i02/02a07301.htm>], Burton Bollag points out that the explosive growth of the Internet is adding to this trend with "more than 300 million users connecting to a resource largely composed in English." As colleges and universities use technology to expand their student body beyond their geographic boundaries, English is becoming the language of choice to attract students from this global pool. Some academics are troubled by the idea of English as the world language. "The spread of English represents a serious cultural and psychological imposition, say many in countries where it isn't a native language. To get the same sense, Americans need only imagine having to learn their calculus in German, or their psychology in Chinese."

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DIGITAL PROJECTS HANDBOOK

In August NEDCC announced the publication of *Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access*, a book for people involved in digital projects. [For more resources, see "Two New Guides to Creating Digital Archives," *CIT Infobits*, no. 26, August 2000, <http://its.unc.edu/tl/infobits/bitaug00.html#8>] This book is "intended to serve as a resource and response to the questions, conflicts, and unique preservation challenges produced by ever-evolving technologies" encountered by libraries, museums, archives, and other collections-holding institutions. Topics covered include project management, vendor relations, selection of materials, and copyright issues. The cost of the text is \$38 US. Ordering information is available at <http://www.nedcc.org/dighand.htm>

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), founded in 1973, is the largest nonprofit, regional conservation center in the United States. Its mission is to improve the preservation programs of libraries, archives, museums, and other historical and cultural organizations; to provide the highest quality services to institutions that cannot afford in-house conservation facilities or that require specialized expertise; and to provide leadership to the preservation field. For more information contact: Northeast Document Conservation Center, 100 Brickstone Square, Andover, MA 01810-1494 USA; tel: 978-470-1010; fax: 978-475-6021; email: nedcc@nedcc.org; Web: <http://www.nedcc.org/>

IBIBLIO: "THE PUBLIC'S LIBRARY"

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently received \$4 million in funding from the Red Hat Center to support ibiblio, which organizers say will become the largest collection of freely-available and publicly-accessible information on the Web.

Some of ibiblio's digital collections include:

Documenting the American South -- primary sources documenting the culture of the American South from the viewpoint of Southerners

EdWeb -- world-wide collection of online educational resources, trends in education policy, and information infrastructure development

World War II Primary Source Document Collection and the Pearl Harbor Archives

BOTNET -- a database to collect and manage disparate stores of botanical data and information and to provide Internet access to the information for botanists on all public, professional, and student levels

To visit ibiblio, link to <http://www.ibiblio.org/>

Link to <http://chronicle.com/free/2000/09/2000091201t.htm> to read a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article about ibiblio.

REPORT ON TEACHERS' USE OF TECHNOLOGY

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) surveyed U.S. public school teachers in 1999 on their "use of computers and the Internet, the availability of this technology in their classrooms and schools, their training and preparation for their use, and the barriers to technology use they encounter."

According to the September 2000 report:

- Approximately half of the public school teachers who had computers or the Internet available in their schools used them for class-room instruction.
- Among those with technology available in their schools, teachers in low-minority and low-poverty schools were generally more likely than teachers in high-minority and high-poverty schools to use computers or the Internet for a wide range of activities, including gathering information at school, creating instructional materials at school, communicating with colleagues at school, and instructing students.
- Among teachers with computers available at home, teachers with the fewest years of experience were more likely than teachers with the most years of experience to use computers or the Internet at home to gather information for planning lessons . . . and creating instructional materials. . . . They were also generally more likely than more experienced teachers to use these technologies to access model lesson plans at school and at home.

"Teachers' Tools for the 21st Century: A Report on Teachers' Use of Technology" is available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/2000102.pdf>

NCES is part of the U.S. Department of Education and is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data that are related to education in the United States and other nations. For more information about NCES and its other services and products, contact: National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 USA; tel: 202-502-7300; fax: 202-502-7466; Web: <http://nces.ed.gov/>

RECOMMENDED READING

"Recommended Reading" lists items that have been recommended to me or that Infobits readers have found particularly interesting and/or useful. Send your recommendations to kotlas@email.unc.edu for possible inclusion in this column.

Cyberphilosophy Journal -- "an electronic forum for students to exchange ideas, arguments and information related to the new field cyberphilosophy. The aim of this journal is to foster and encourage discussion, research and exploration of the significant impact of the growth of educational, informational and recreational technology upon the modern world." The journal is a outgrowth of cyberphilosophy (philosophy about computers and the computing revolution) classes taught by Prof. Wesley Cooper (University of Alberta Philosophy Dept.) and Prof. Jeff McLaughlin (University College of the Cariboo Philosophy Dept.) You can read the journal at <http://www.cariboo.bc.ca/cpj/>