

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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IS THE CLASSROOM OBSOLETE?

In "Classroom Obsolete? Hardly: Online Learning Revitalizes It" (*The Lakewood Report on Technology for Learning*, August 1997, vol. 3, no. 8, pp. 1-2) Elliott Masie argues that the importance of the classroom will actually increase as online learning becomes more widespread. Masie lists the things that people want from the instructor-led classroom experience and reasons that they may not be supplanted by online substitutes. If the classroom is not going away, he suggests several ways to reposition the classroom in an organization to revitalize it and continue its relevance in the learning process.

The Lakewood Report on Technology for Learning is published monthly by Lakewood Publications, Inc., 50 S. Ninth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402 USA; tel: 800-328-4329 or 612-333-0471; Web: <http://www.trainingsupersite.com/> Annual subscriptions are \$291. Information on group subscription rates is available by calling 800-707-7749. Selected articles from current issues of the newsletter are on the Web site at http://www.trainingsupersite.com/tss_link/lakeset.htm (Please note that the articles at this URL change monthly and back issues are not available.)

WILL TECHNOTAINMENT MAKE SCHOOLS IRRELEVANT?

According to Richard Saul Wurman, the next big thing in education is "technotainment" which "won't so much replace schools as render them irrelevant, a process that has already started with the advent of technologies such as learning games on CD-ROMs. . . . The education system is catastrophic and finally being perceived as catastrophic," he declares. "By 2025 it will have atrophied." Who is Wurman and who is listening to his opinions? His checkered career includes writing *Information Anxiety* (1989) which looked at the effects of information overload caused by new technologies, and *Follow the Yellow Brick Road* (1991), in which he attempted to teach how to give and take instructions. In the June 23, 1997, issue of *Fortune* ("Richard Saul Wurman: The King of Access," pp. 106-116) David Stipp tells how Wurman now makes his living by hosting high-dollar, limited-access conferences called TEDs, so-called because they focus on the convergence of technology, entertainment, and design. The eclectic selection of speakers appear for free while the audience pays over \$2000 per person to attend these three-day conferences. Most of the attendees are high-level directors and CEOs from major U.S. corporations, including Bill Gates, Nicholas Negroponte (head of MIT's Media Lab), John Naisbitt, Daniel Boorstin, and Forrest Sawyer (ABC News).

Wurman's first Technotainment TED (at the Sony Imax Theatre in New York City, September 24-27, 1997) will center on the convergence of computer-aided learning and entertainment, yet none of the announced presenters are recognized experts in the field of K-12 education (see <http://www.ted.com/tspeak.html> for a list of confirmed speakers). Wurman admits that he is breaking new ground with this conference and there is no assurance that the ideas formulated during the sessions will translate into radically new directions in educational methods and institutions.

The *Fortune* article is available online at

<http://www.pathfinder.com/@@7Y2uwAcALPyuv6Dx/fortune/1997/970623/wur.html>

"The Next Big Thing?" another article from the same issue is available at

<http://www.pathfinder.com/@@7Y2uwAcALPyuv6Dx/fortune/1997/970623/wur1.html>

For more details on the TED Conferences link to <http://www.ted.com/>

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Subscription information is available at

<http://www.pathfinder.com/@@IRps1gcA5wAIBdCq/fortune/freeissue/index.html>

WILLIAM BLAKE ARCHIVE ONLINE

The William Blake Archive is a hypermedia archive sponsored by the Library of Congress and supported by the Getty Grant Program, the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia, Sun Microsystems, and Inso Corporation. The Archive's editors -- Morris Eaves (University of Rochester), Robert Essick (University of California, Riverside), and Joseph Viscomi (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) -- recently announced that *The Book of Thel*, copy F, is now online in searchable form. Although this is one of Blake's shorter works, and its eight plates have already been available on the site since November 1996, this work is the prototype for all future works to be added to the Archive and provides a demonstration of the potential of electronic resources in the humanities. The copy has been tagged using SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) which offers the Archive's users the opportunity to perform sophisticated searches, either on the text of the plates, or, more remarkably, on the content of their illustrations. Search results are retrieved and presented using DynaWeb, a product of the Inso Corporation. Users with Java-capable browsers can use Inote, Java-based software developed at the IATH, to assist them in their study of the Archive's visual materials. Inote lets users examine editorial annotations of a given image, open the image, and zoom to the specific area containing the object of the search.

The Archive also includes a selective bibliography of criticism, reference materials, and standard editions, with about 500 entries. A searchable online version of David V. Erdman's *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* is also planned. The Blake Archive is located at: <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/blake/>

For more information about SGML link to "The SGML Primer" at <http://www.sq.com/sgmlinfo/primbody.html>

For more information on the DynaWeb software link to

<http://www.inso.com/frames/consumer/dynatext/productinfo/dynaweb.htm>

For more information on other archive projects at the IATH link to <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/reports.html>

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN HUMANITIES SCHOLARSHIP

The American Council on Learned Societies has announced that its recently published Occasional Paper No. 37, "Information Technology in Humanities Scholarship: Achievements, Prospects, and Challenges-The United States Focus," by Pamela Pavliscak, Seamus Ross, and Charles Henry. The paper is now available online in a hypertext version at <http://www.acls.org/op37.htm>

The authors "present only a selective view of current activities, focusing primarily on work by American scholars, with

some references to international projects of relevance to the humanities, since computer technology now makes scholarship a genuinely global enterprise. This overview is intended for scholars in the humanities who are not yet aware of what has been accomplished, as well as for those who direct and fund research and higher education." The report comprises five sections: a background essay, a survey of work and achievements in a variety of media, a view of new developments, a look at what is needed to fully prepare faculty, researchers and institutions to take full advantage of the electronic medium, and recommendations and follow-up activities. Also included are a collection of links to projects and services and a brief bibliography of computing in the humanities. An expanded version of this report will be available later this year on the American Arts & Letters Network at <http://www.rice.edu/aaln/>

The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), founded in 1919, is a private, non-profit federation of 58 national scholarly organizations. Its purpose is "the advancement of humanistic studies and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies." For more information, contact ACLS, 228 East 45th Street, New York City, NY 10017-3398 USA; tel: 212-697-1505; fax: 212-949-8058; Web: <http://www.acls.org/>

SHARE CAROLINA INITIATIVE SHARES INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS

As part of the Share Carolina initiative, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Academic Technology and Networks is making available the source code for the instructional Internet development tools which have been used and supported by Carolina's Simple Start program (a program which supports instructors using these tools at UNC-Chapel Hill). Any educational or non-profit organization is welcome to download and modify the tools as it sees fit.

The tools include a Web interface for creating and managing listservs, Web-based discussion forums, a form and quiz builder, and templates for instructor and course home pages. The codes, readme files, and the Simple Start overview are available from the Share Carolina page at <http://www.unc.edu/cit/sharecarolina/> More information about the Simple Start program and related materials are available at <http://www.unc.edu/courses/ssp/>

For more details contact Lisa Croucher, Simple Start, Academic Technology and Networks, CB 3420, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 USA; tel: 919-962-6088; fax: 919-962-5334; email: lisa_croucher@unc.edu

I'LL HAVE MY AGENT CALL YOU

Intelligent software agents -- what are they and why do we need them? According to Don Gilbert of IBM Corporation, some of the things that an intelligent agent can do for you include finding and filtering information you are looking for on the Web, customizing the information to your preferences, and automating the handling of things you don't want to take care of yourself. While there are a few intelligent agent products on the market, this is a young field of research, and the bulk of development is yet to come. Most of the articles in the July/August 1997 issue of *IEEE Internet Computing* (vol. 1, no. 4) focus on current research in intelligent agent software and technical issues related to their development. The issue is also online at <http://www.computer.org/internet/ic1997/w4toc.htm>

IEEE Internet Computing [ISSN 1089-7801] is published bimonthly by the IEEE Computer Society, 730 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1992 USA; tel: 202-371-0101; fax: 202-728-9614; Web: <http://www.computer.org/>

Subscriptions are available at reduced rates for members of IEEE and other technical organizations. Non-member rates are available on request from the IEEE Publications Office, 10662 Los Vaqueros Circle, P.O. Box 3014, Los Alamitos, CA 90720-1264 USA; tel: 714-821-8380 or 800-272-6657; fax: 714-821-4010; Web: <http://computer.org/subscrib/subscrib.htm>

For more material on intelligent agents, see the following:

"Intelligent Agents: The Right Information at the Right Time" -- a white paper by Don Gilbert.
<http://www.networking.ibm.com/iag/iagwp1.html>

The UMBC (University of Maryland Baltimore County) AgentWeb pages
<http://www.cs.umbc.edu/agents/>

NEW ONLINE JOURNAL OF COMPUTER VISION RESEARCH

The MIT Press has launched a new refereed, archival Internet journal of computer vision entitled *Videre: A Journal of Computer Vision Research* [ISSN 1089-2788]. Papers will be organized into quarterly issues, beginning with Volume 1, Number 1 in Summer 1997. The scope includes all areas of computer vision. Topics covered include CAD-based vision; computational models of biological vision; learning in computer vision; medical computer vision; vision and graphics; and vision, robotics, and control. For more information see the Videre Web page at
<http://mitpress.mit.edu/VIDE/>

Subscriptions are available at \$30/individual (U.S.) and \$125/institutional (U.S.) from Circulation Department; MIT Press Journals; Five Cambridge Center; Cambridge, MA 02142-1493 USA; tel: 617-253-2889; fax: 617-577-1545; email: journals-orders@mit.edu

LIBRARIAN'S LINKS

New Information Resource Guide:
"Italian Language Resources on the Internet: Selected Sites"
<http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-51.html>

URL: <http://www.unc.edu/cit/infobits/bitaug97.html>

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