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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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IT TRENDS AND ISSUES

Since 2001, *Learning Circuits* magazine has conducted a reader survey on e-learning to gauge the "impact that technology developments, supplier consolidations, and the economy have had on e-learning efforts." This year 272 readers responded to the 2003 survey. Questions included how respondents' organizations used e-learning and what percentage of their training budgets was used for various e-learning activities. The survey results are available at <http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/nov2003/2003trends.htm>.

Learning Circuits (<http://www.learningcircuits.org/>) is an online publication of the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), 1640 King Street, Box 1443 Alexandria, VA, 22313-2043 USA; tel: 703-683-8100 or 800-628-2783; fax: 703-683-1523; Web: <http://www.astd.org/>.

"Recommended Readings on the Top-Ten IT Issues" (*EDUCAUSE Review*, vol. 38, no. 6, November/December 2003, pp. 94-95) provides a reading list based on issues identified by the 2003 EDUCAUSE Current Issues Survey. Issues addressed include IT funding strategies; security and identity management; faculty development, support, and training; and distributed learning and teaching and learning strategies. The reading list is available at http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm03/erm036_articles.asp?id=5. The complete survey and further analysis are available at <http://www.educause.edu/issues/index.asp?page=activities>.

EDUCAUSE Review [ISSN 1527-6619], a bimonthly print magazine that explores developments in information technology and education, is published by EDUCAUSE, 1150 18th Street, NW, Suite 1010, Washington, DC 20036 USA; tel: 202-872-4200; fax: 202-872-4318; email: info@educause.edu; Web: <http://www.educause.edu/>. Articles from current and back issues of *EDUCAUSE Review* are available on the Web at <http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/>.

DATA DELUGE

It's not your imagination that you're drowning in too much information. Faculty and students at the School of Information Management and Systems, University of California at Berkeley, attempted to estimate how much new information is created and distributed each year. They looked at information stored in four types of media -- print, film, magnetic, and optical -- and seen or heard in four information flows -- telephone, radio, TV, and the Internet. They found that the amount of data has doubled since they began their research in 1999, resulting in about five exabytes of new information in 2002. How much is five exabytes? According to the researchers, five exabytes of information is "equivalent in size to the information contained in half a million new libraries the size of the Library of Congress print collections." The report, "How Much Information 2003," is available online at <http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info-2003/>.

ONLINE CONTENT DESIGN GUIDES

In "A Usability Study for Promoting eContent in Higher Education" (*Educational Technology & Society*, vol. 6, no. 4, October 2003, pp.112-124), Norshuhada Shiratuddin, Shahizan Hassan, and Monica Landoni discuss the advantages and disadvantages of eContent and its potential uses in higher education. The authors also cover guidelines for well-designed and usable eContent. The article is available online at http://ifets.ieee.org/periodical/6_4/11.pdf.

Educational Technology & Society [ISSN 1436-4522] is a peer-reviewed, quarterly online journal published by the International Forum of Educational Technology & Society and the IEEE Learning Technology Task Force (LTF). It is available in HTML and PDF formats at no cost at <http://ifets.ieee.org/periodical/>.

Educators designing their own web pages may also find the National Cancer Institute's "Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines" a useful starting place. The publication includes suggestions for page layout and styles, content organization, navigation, and accessibility. The guide is available online at http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/Usability_guidelines.pdf.

LIBRARIES AND E-LEARNING

In the spring of 2003, the OCLC Online Computer Library Center created an E-learning Task Force, a concerted effort to achieve a cross-section of voices, including librarians, administrators, technologists, and faculty from the cooperative's academic institutions. Members represented institutions from across the continental United States and the United Kingdom and from the full range of institution types. An outcome of the Task Force's work is its recently-published white paper, "Libraries and the Enhancement of E-learning." The paper "provides an incisive look at how college coursework is being enhanced electronically and online." The paper is available online at <http://www.oclc.org/index/elearning/default.htm>.

Founded in 1967, the OCLC Online Computer Library Center is a nonprofit, membership, computer library service and research organization dedicated to the public purposes of furthering access to the world's information and reducing information costs. More than 45,000 libraries in 84 countries and territories around the world use OCLC services to locate, acquire, catalog, lend, and preserve library materials. For more information, contact: OCLC, 6565 Frantz Road, Dublin, OH 43017-3395 USA; tel: 614-764-6000 or 800-848-5878 (U.S. only); email: oclc@oclc.org; Web: <http://www.oclc.org/>.

Recommended Reading

"Recommended Reading" lists items that have been recommended to me or that *Infobits* readers have found particularly interesting and/or useful, including books, articles, and websites published by Infobits subscribers. Send your recommendations to kotlas@email.unc.edu for possible inclusion in this column.

Infobits subscriber Lisa Neal (lisa@acm.org) was project manager for "You Are the Historian: Investigating the First Thanksgiving," the award-winning website for the Plimoth Plantation's online learning center at <http://www.plimoth.org/olc/>. Lisa presented a paper, "Making Learning Fun when Teaching Children Online: Plimoth Plantation's Online Learning Center," at the E-Learn 2003 conference. She would be happy to email a copy to anyone who is interested.

The Flickering Mind: The False Promise of Technology in the Classroom and How Learning Can Be Saved

by Todd Oppenheimer

Random House, 2003; ISBN: 1400060443

"Are computers the 'ultimate innovation' that will lead us into a 21st-century educational utopia? Or are they merely distractions, part of a long line of technological advances that are incompatible with proven traditions of learning? Oppenheimer's book, titled after a metaphor for the short attention spans of today's students, locates the waning educational computing craze in the historical context of an ed-tech trajectory that has brought visions of accelerated academic achievement followed by disappointment."

-- *Publisher's Weekly* review

For more information, including an excerpt from the book's first chapter, see <http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?1400060443>.