

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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ERIC'S NEW DOCUMENT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

The U.S. Department of Education's Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) provides a variety of services and products on a broad range of education-related issues, including the ERIC database, the world's largest source of education information. The database contains more than 950,000 abstracts of documents and journal articles on education research and practice. In the November 1998 issue of *ERICNews*, the center announced its new electronic document subscription service, E*Subscribe, which will begin in January 1999.

"In response to the growing need of research institutions and their patrons to have immediate access to ERIC materials, the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) is creating E*Subscribe, a new electronic document subscription service. Features of the new service will include unlimited access to the ERIC database and electronic document images; search manager capabilities (save, reactivate, and modify frequently searched topics); electronic delivery in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format; and ordering capability for documents not available electronically. When the service opens in January 1999, subscribers will initially have access to one full year of ERIC documents; access will expand to include document images from 1996 to the present. Institutions may now register to help EDRS beta test the new electronic subscription service. Beta testers are asked to try out the features of the service and provide feedback on functionality, flow, and ease of use. In return for this assistance, EDRS is providing ERIC document images from October through December 1997 for downloading free of charge. The free electronic documents will be available for the duration of the beta test (through December 1998)."

To register as an E*Subscribe beta tester, visit the EDRS Web site at

<https://orders.edrs.com/members/survey.cfm>

For more information on E*Subscribe, call EDRS at 800-443-3742.

ERICNews is available by email and is published bimonthly by ACCESS ERIC with support from the National Library of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

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<http://ericir.syr.edu/>

For more information on U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/>

TECHNOLOGICAL VISIONS CONFERENCE

The Metamorphosis Project is funded by the Annenberg Center for Communication and organized by the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California. The aim of the project is to "raise the level of public discussion about the advent of new communication technologies (digital media, the Internet, and multimedia), their social and cultural impact, and their effects on community." This month the project sponsored the conference "Technological Visions: Utopian and Dystopian Perspectives," bringing together "journalists, academics, cyberculture advocates, policymakers, and science fiction visionaries to examine how technologies have been envisioned throughout history and the social impact of new technologies." You can view the conference presentations using RealAudio's RealPlayer Web browser plugin.

RealPlayer is available for free downloading from <http://www.real.com/>

After installing RealPlayer, connect to <http://www.metamorph.org/confer/> to link to the broadcast files.

For more information on the Metamorphosis Project, visit the Web site at <http://www.metamorph.org/>

WEBCASTS FROM EDUCOM '98 CONFERENCE

EDUCAUSE is another organization making its conference presentations available over the Web. Webcasts of the EDUCOM'98 general session speakers are available using RealPlayer. To view presentations by Alan Kay ("The Computer 'Revolution' Hasn't Happened Yet!) and Ben Shneiderman ("Educational Aspirins for Web Fever: Relate--Create--Donate") link to <http://www.educause.edu/conference/e98/webcast98.html>

EDUCAUSE's focus is on the "management and use of computational, network, and information resources in support of higher education's missions of scholarship, instruction, service, and administration."

For more information on EDUCAUSE, link to <http://www.educause.edu/>

NEWSLETTER ON TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

NETFUTURE: Technology and Human Responsibility, edited by Steve Talbott, is an electronic newsletter that "looks beyond the generally recognized 'risks' of computer use such as privacy violations, unequal access, censorship, and dangerous computer glitches. It seeks especially to address those deep levels at which we half-consciously shape technology and are shaped by it." In "Who's Killing Higher Education? (Or Is It Suicide?)," (October 15, 1998 issue) Talbott ponders the long-term survival of the university if technology should result in the reconception of education as the "transfer of information from one database or brain to another."

The article is available online at

http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/netfuture/1998/Oct1598_78.html#2

NETFUTURE is published by The Nature Institute, 169 Route 21C, Ghent NY 12075 USA; tel: 518-672-0116; Web: <http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/netfuture/index.html>

Talbott is author of *The Future Does Not Compute: Transcending the Machines in our Midst* [Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., 1995; ISBN: 1565920856] More information on the book is available at <http://www.oreilly.com/people/staff/stevet/fdnc/index.html>

CORPORATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL NETWORKING

The strategic mission of the Corporation for Research and Educational Networking (CREN) is to "support low-cost access to worldwide electronic networking and its use for the benefit of education and research communities." CREN traces its roots back to the BITNET network of the 1980's which connected university and research institutions. Its current responsibilities include developing seminars, workshops, and materials to train faculty, students, and staff in strategic technology areas and creating software tools for using technology. Although some materials on the CREN Web site are accessible only to members, parts of two seminars, "Communications Basics" and "Untangling the Web," are available for general public viewing. Faculty and staff at member institutions can get an ID and password by email which allows them access to the full transcripts.

For more information, contact: Corporation for Research and Educational Networking, 1112 16th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036 USA; tel: 202-331-5366; fax: 202-293-2853; email: cren@cren.net; Web: <http://www.cren.net/>

To find out if your institution is a CREN member, check the list at <http://www.cren.net/cren/memberlist.html>

TIPS FOR IMPROVING WEB SITE USABILITY

If you are involved in designing and maintaining Web sites, check out Jakob Nielsen's biweekly column "The Alertbox: Current Issues in Web Usability." Nielsen, former Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer and the company's Web "usability guru," is author of *Multimedia and Hypertext: The Internet and Beyond* [Boston: AP Professional, 1995; ISBN: 0-12-518408-5] and *Usability Engineering* [Boston: AP Professional, 1994; ISBN: 0-12-518406-9]. His next book, *Designing Excellent Websites: Secrets of an Information Architekt* [Indianapolis: New Riders Publishing, 1999; ISBN 1-56205-810-X], will be published in January 1999.

The Alertbox is on the Web at <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/>

For more about Nielsen's other publications, see his Web site at <http://www.useit.com/jakob/>

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Working Group on Scholarly Communication is a multidisciplinary problem-centered group with a broad concern for all dimensions of contemporary scholarly communication. These include, but are not limited to, the economics of publishing, the evolution of scholarly disciplines and its effect on publishing, information policy, copyright, the interactions of academic reward systems and publishing, and new communication technologies and their potential for providing relief from the crisis in scholarly communication. The group's newly-revised Web site contains links to a selection of electronic journals, samples of exemplary copyright notices, and links

to articles and other resources related to electronic publishing.
The site is at <http://ils.unc.edu/schol-com/index.html>