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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.

[Chronicle Adds New Feature on Distance Education](#)

[A New Paradigm in Learning](#)

[The "Messyware" Advantage](#)

[Internet Searching and Training Newsletter](#)

[Preservation Manual Online](#)

[Recommended Reading](#)

CHRONICLE ADDS NEW FEATURE ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently added a new section on developments in distance education to their website. Updated daily, it includes stories from *The Chronicle*, links to news from elsewhere on the Web, tips on teaching on line, and online resources on distance learning. You do not have to be a *Chronicle* subscriber to get access to this section.

Recent articles include:

"Instructor Cuts Dropout Rate by Giving Extra Attention to On-Line Students"

<http://chronicle.com/free/99/12/99121601u.htm>

"Who Owns On-Line Courses? Colleges and Professors Start to Sort It Out"

<http://chronicle.com/free/v46/i17/17a04501.htm>

"An On-Line Student Enjoys Class Flexibility but Misses Social Contact"

<http://chronicle.com/free/99/12/99120801u.htm>

To read other distance education articles link to <http://chronicle.com/distance/>

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A NEW PARADIGM IN LEARNING

In "Beyond Education: The Age of Transaction and the 'Scene' of Digital Learning [*Syllabus*, vol. 13, no. 4, November/December 1999, pp. 14, 16, 18] Carl Raschke, professor of religious studies at the University of Denver, describes a new paradigm -- transactive learning. He argues that information technologies have changed the nature of learners from passive to transactional. "In the transactional paradigm teaching and learning are no longer separate activities, or even abilities, in the generation of knowledge. The universe of transactional learning is no-longer bi-directional, but multi-polar with the numerous ripples and eddies of intellectual experience roiling about that center of investigative activity we call the 'learner'. . . . In perhaps more than a simple metaphorical sense, it signifies the 'end of education' as the word has been used historically."

The complete article is online at: http://www.syllabus.com/nov99_magfea.html

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THE "MESSYWARE" ADVANTAGE

In "The Messyware Advantage" [*Communications of the ACM*, vol. 42, no. 11, November 1999, pp. 68-73], Ravi Ganesan, Chief Technology Officer at CheckFree Corp., coins the term "messyware" and defines it as "the sum of the institutional subject area knowledge, experienced human capital, core business practices, service, quality focus and IT assets required to run any business."

Ganesan does not believe in a "software-centric vision in which the Internet renders traditional distributors obsolete." Instead, he believes that the role of the middleman (whether a parts distributor or a librarian) is more critical than ever, and that having the messyware advantage can provide users with a higher quality service than technology-only Internet services.

Ganesan concedes that the Internet provides new and more-efficient services, "it does not do much for you when things go wrong. On the other hand, much messyware is focused on exactly this part of the business. Companies focused on the messyware recognize that computers and people are imperfect, that things will go wrong, and consequently prepare for problems and react speedily to fix them. . . . A software company's focus is largely on product functionality, whereas a messyware company lives and dies by product quality and customer satisfaction."

While most of the examples Ganesan uses to make his point are in the area of business services, he also uses libraries to make his point. There is "more to a library than books. There is the invaluable card catalog, the indispensable librarian and the functions the library staff performs -- book selection, cataloging, stocking, and so forth. If books are the software of the library, these other functions are . . . the messyware of the library."

The complete article is available in the ACM Digital Library at <http://www.acm.org/pubs/articles/journals/cacm/1999-42-11/p68-ganesan/p68-ganesan.pdf>

For more information about the ACM Digital Library see <http://www.acm.org/dl/>

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INTERNET SEARCHING AND TRAINING NEWSLETTER

Cyberpulse is a free quarterly electronic newsletter about Internet searching and training intended for librarians, information professionals, Internet trainers, and information searchers. The newsletter is written by Rita Vine, a librarian and Internet trainer, for IMR Integrated Management Resources, Inc., a Canadian company that specializes in developing customized Internet training programs. Some issues of are also published in *Bibliotheca Medica Canadiana*, the official journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association/Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada.

You can get *Cyberpulse* delivered by email or read current and back issues on the Web at <http://workingfaster.com/cyberpulse/about.htm>

For more information contact: Rita Vine, IMR Integrated Management Resources Internet Training, 1235 Bay Street, Suite 1000, Toronto, Ontario M5R 3K4 Canada; tel: 416-928-1405; email: rita@workingfaster.com; Web: <http://workingfaster.com/>

PRESERVATION MANUAL ONLINE

The revised and expanded third edition of the Northeast Document Conservation Center's *Preservation of Library & Archival Materials: A Manual*, edited by Sherelyn Ogden, is available electronically on the NEDCC Website. Two sections by Paul Conway, Head of the Yale University Library Preservation Department, are of particular interest to anyone involved in the maintenance and preservation of digital archives. In "Digital Technology Made Simpler," Conway "describes the key components of a digital imaging system and the most important steps in the digital imaging process. . . . [The paper] asks some big questions that ought to be considered as libraries and archives move from experimenting with the technology to using it as a tool for transforming the way they do business." In "The Relevance of Preservation in a Digital World" he "suggests a framework for understanding preservation in the digital context by creating a bridge from the five core principles of traditional preservation practice: longevity, choice, quality, integrity, and access." The manual is available in both English and Spanish at <http://www.nedcc.org/pubs.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/>

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

Infobits subscriber Arun-Kumar Tripathi (email: tripathi@statistik.uni-dortmund.de) recommends the following book:

The University and the Knowledge Society, edited by Peter Baggen, Agnes Tellings, and Wouter van Haaften. Philosophy of higher education series, no. 1. Bemmell-London-Paris: Concorde Publishing House, 1998. ISBN 90-76230-03-X

For more information see <http://www.concorde-publisher.com/PHE-1.htm>

"The arrival of the knowledge society -- a term referring to modern society's increasingly heavy dependence on information - turns out to be both a blessing and an evil for the university. On the one hand, the knowledge society needs what universities traditionally are best at: the production and dissemination of knowledge. On the other hand, the university is no longer the only or even the main producer of knowledge. Many competitors have entered the knowledge and research market, including vocational colleges, research institutes associated with high-tech companies, and even the Internet. This dependence makes the university's position in society precarious. Because institutions of higher learning are forced to make the knowledge they produce fit the demands of their clients in order to retain both students and funds, these institutions find themselves at the mercy of intangible market trends."

[Description from the publisher's Web page]