

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.

[Survey on Quality and Extent of Online Education](#)

[Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs](#)

[Information Literacy Resource](#)

[Digital Information Will Never Survive by Accident](#)

[A Professor's Response to "Thwarted Innovation" Report](#)

["Consumer Reports" for Research in Education](#)

[Intellectual Honesty in the Electronic Age](#)

[Web Links as Analogues of Citations](#)

[Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About a URL](#)

[Recommended Reading](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE

As you start a new school year, please tell new colleagues about this newsletter. They can subscribe by following the instructions at the end of this newsletter or by contacting the editor at kotlas@email.unc.edu.

SURVEY ON QUALITY AND EXTENT OF ONLINE EDUCATION

The Sloan Consortium's 2003 Survey of Online Learning wanted to know would students, faculty, and institutions embrace online education as a delivery method and would the quality of online education match that of face-to-face instruction. The survey found strong evidence that students are willing to sign up for online courses and that institutions consider online courses part of a "critical long-term strategy for their institution." It is less clear that faculty have embraced online teaching with the same degree of enthusiasm. The survey's findings are available in "Sizing the Opportunity: The Quality & Extent of Online Education in the U.S., 2002 and 2003" by I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman, Sloan Center for Online Education at Olin and Babson Colleges. The complete report is online at http://www.sloan-c.org/resources/sizing_opportunity.pdf.

The Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is a consortium of institutions and organizations committed "to help learning organizations continually improve quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines." Sloan-C is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. For more information, see <http://www.sloan-c.org/>.

RHETORIC, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURE OF WEBLOGS

The Department of Rhetoric at the University of Minnesota has created "Into the Blogosphere," a website to explore the "discursive, visual, social, and other communicative features of weblogs." Educators and faculty can post, comment upon, and critique essays covering such areas as mass communication, pedagogy, and virtual community. The website is located at <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/>.

For more information on weblogs in academe, see also:

"Educational Blogging"

By Stephen Downes

EDUCAUSE Review, vol. 9, no. 5, September/October 2004, pp. 14-16, 18, 20-22, 24, 26

<http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm04/erm0450.asp>

"The Educated Blogger"

CIT Infobits, June 2004

<http://its.unc.edu/tl/infobits/bitjun04.html#1>

INFORMATION LITERACY RESOURCE

"It has become increasingly clear that students cannot learn everything they need to know in their field of study in a few years of college. Information literacy equips them with the critical skills necessary to become independent lifelong learners." The ALA Association of College & Research Libraries' "Information Literacy" website provides resources for faculty and librarians to use in teaching and promoting information literacy. The site includes core readings, syllabi, tutorials, and workshop ideas. The website is available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/informationliteracy.htm>.

ACRL, a division of the American Library Association, is a professional association of academic librarians and other interested individuals. It is dedicated to enhancing the ability of academic library and information professionals to serve the information needs of the higher education community and to improve learning, teaching, and research. For more information, contact Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795 USA; tel: 800-545-2433; fax: 312-280-2520; email: acrl@ala.org; Web: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/>.

DIGITAL INFORMATION WILL NEVER SURVIVE BY ACCIDENT

In a recent interview (*SAP INFO*, August 2, 2004) Neil Beagrie, Joint Information Systems Committee Partnership manager at the British Library, raises concerns about the need for digital preservation. "For the Web we know the average life of a webpage is around 44 days. This impacts not only on ephemera of just local interest but on core information resources. . . . A serious and worsening gap has developed between our ability to create digital information and our infrastructure and capacity to manage and preserve it over time. Some commentators have referred to the likely cumulative effect of this as a future 'digital dark ages'." Beagrie discusses some of the steps being taken to prevent the "dark ages" at the British Library that can be implemented for any archives or collection of scholarly materials. The article is available online at <http://www.sapinfo.net/public/en/index.php4/article/Article-3089140c577c931a92/en/articleStatisti>

SAP [Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing] *INFO* is a publication of the Corporate Communications Department of SAP AG. For more information, contact Bernhard Hochlehnert, SAP AG, Global Corporate Communications, Global Customer Affairs, Neurottstrasse 16, D-69190 Walldorf,

A PROFESSOR'S RESPONSE TO "THWARTED INNOVATION" REPORT

The June 2004 issue of *CIT Infobits* linked to a Weatherstation Project report, "Thwarted Innovation: What Happened to E-learning and Why" (<http://its.unc.edu/tl/infobits/bitjun04.html#2>). In "Thwarted Innovation or Premature Prognostication" Edward H. Ladon, University of Colorado at Denver, responds to some of the report's findings: "given how early it is in the development of the e-learning field, I wonder about the usefulness of asking 'Why did the boom in e-learning go bust?' It seems a bit premature" (*Educator's Voice*, August 11, 2004). Ladon's full commentary is online at <http://www.ecollege.com/news/EdVoice.learn>.

Educator's Voice is published monthly by the eCollege Instructional Design Team. For more information contact eCollege, eCollege Building, 4900 S. Monaco Street, Denver, CO 80237 USA; tel: 888-884-7325; fax: 303-873-7449; Web: <http://www.ecollege.com/>.

"CONSUMER REPORTS" FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The What Works Clearinghouse was established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences with \$18.5 million in funding to "provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education." The Clearinghouse reviews, according to relevance and validity, the "effectiveness of replicable educational interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies) that intend to improve student outcomes." This summer, the Clearinghouse released two of its planned reports: peer-assisted learning interventions and middle school math curricula. For more information about the What Works Clearinghouse and descriptions of all topics to be evaluated, go to <http://www.w-w-c.org/>.

See also:

"'What Works' Research Site Unveiled" by Debra Viadero
Education Week, vol. 23, no. 42, pp. 1, 33, July 14, 2004
http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=42Whatworks.h23

"'What Works' Site Opens Dialogue on Research"
Letter to Editor from Talbot Bielefeldt, Center for Applied Research in Educational Technology,
International Society for Technology in Education
Education Week, vol. 23, no. 44, p. 44, August 11, 2004
http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=44Letter.h23

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

"[T]echnology also adds new vistas to in-class cheating. Cell phones and PDA's provide a platform to share real time text messaging, adding a new angle to a note tossed not only from one side of a room to another, but also from one side of the campus or further beyond. With programmable calculators, PDA's and other handheld intelligent devices, students can store notes, access websites, send e-mail, or grab ready-made formulas to ease calculations. Camera phones have also been reported as potential devices for cheating by scanning a test's contents for later review. No gum wrapper or note tucked into a sleeve can compare to the storage and intelligence of these devices."

In the conference paper "Intellectual Honesty in the Electronic Age" (presented at the University of

Calgary) John Iliff and Judy Xiao, College of Staten Island, CUNY, give an overview of why students cheat and provide several ways, including technological solutions, for preventing cheating. The paper is available online at http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/~jiliff/iliff_xiao.htm.

See also:

"Combating Cheating in Online Student Assessment" *CIT Infobits*, July 2004

<http://its.unc.edu/tl/infobits/bitjul04.html#3>

For more information about the annual University of Calgary's Best Practices in e-Learning Online Conference, held August 23-27, 2004, go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/conference/>.

WEB LINKS AS ANALOGUES OF CITATIONS

"Citations in conventional print publications have traditionally been used as indicators of links between researchers, and it is tempting to regard Web links as analogues of citations. To what extent do hypertext links between Websites indicate research links?" In "Web Links as Analogues of Citations" [*Information Research*, vol. 9, no. 4, July 2004], Alastair G. Smith studied how Web link citations are similar and different from print citations. He concludes that while the nature of links "are more varied than print citations . . . a sizable minority were analogous to citations." Smith also proposes a classification system for studying links to research-oriented websites. His system is based on three aspects of the links: nature of the source page, nature of the target page, and reason for linking. The paper is available online at <http://informationr.net/ir/9-4/paper188.html>.

Information Research [ISSN 1368-1613] is a freely available, international, scholarly journal, dedicated to making accessible the results of research across a wide range of information-related disciplines. It is privately published by Professor T.D. Wilson, Professor Emeritus of the University of Sheffield, with in-kind support from the University and its Department of Information Studies. For more information, contact: Tom Wilson, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK; tel: +44 (0)114-222-2642; fax: +44 (0)114-278-0300; email: t.d.wilson@shef.ac.uk; Web: <http://informationr.net/ir/>.

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT A URL

Michael Fagan's URLinfo is a collection of tools to provide information about virtually any web page address (URL). Some of what you can find using URLinfo's tools include: basic information about the page, who owns the page, people's reviews of the page, who links to the page, the amount of traffic the page generates, and the URLs of similar pages. URLinfo also includes links to page translation tools and archives of inactive web pages. URLinfo is available for use at no charge at <http://www.faganfinder.com/urlinfo/>.

Michael Fagan is an undergraduate student in the Science and Business program at the University of Waterloo. In addition to URLinfo, his website "Fagan Finder" (<http://www.faganfinder.com/>) includes tool sets for a variety of Web searching tasks.

For a review of URLinfo's features, see:

"Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About URL"

By Chris Sherman

Search Engine Watch, August 24, 2004

<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3398511>

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.

"E-learning and Language Change--Observations, Tendencies and Reflections"

By Henrik Hansson and Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis

First Monday, vol. 9, no. 8, August 2, 2004

http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_8/hansson/index.html

"The English language is influencing all other languages largely due to the Internet and media. This growing influence has implications for e-learning in non-English speaking cultures. More English terms and grammar are being adopted in other languages. In addition, it is becoming necessary to master English in order to utilize Internet resources and participate in the "global classroom" as a teacher or student."

"Schools and society at large should be more aware of the filtering effects of the Internet related to the change within languages for communication and as a medium of instruction. Society as a whole could benefit from a more integrated approach and certainly further exploration is necessary on the evolution of human language groups."