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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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DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE DISTANCE EDUCATION MATERIALS

"For disabled college students, professors' increased use of the Web for instruction can create obstacles rather than clear them away. Many disabled students find that new technology cuts them off from the learning process. To prevent that, colleges are -- among other things -- designing Web sites and buying computer workstations that meet the needs of disabled students." In "Making Web Sites Work for People With Disabilities" (by Andrea L. Foster, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 2, 2001, p. A30) read how colleges and universities are coping with the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, "Americans with Disabilities Act of Cyberspace." The article is on the web at <http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i21/21a03001.htm>

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Academic Technology and Networks and the Center for Instructional Technology recently sponsored a workshop for faculty and staff who are developing web-based materials for distance education courses. The focus of the workshop was on making these online materials accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. You can access one of the workshop's handouts, "Designing Accessible Web Pages: Helpful Tools and Readings," on the web at <http://www.unc.edu/cit/documents/access/handout.html>

COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED SCIENCE JOURNALS PROJECT

At a forum held during the American Libraries Association Midwinter Meeting, the Scholarly Publications and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) formally launched its "Declaring Independence" project. The purpose of the project is to address the rising costs of publishing scientific journals and to "transform them from commercial commodities back to instruments of service to education and research." The project's report, "Declaring Independence: A Guide to Creating Community-Controlled Science Journals," is published by SPARC and TRLN (the Triangle Research Libraries Network). The report includes information on several projects to digitize, disseminate, and archive scholars' scientific and technical publications online. The report can be accessed online at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/DI/>

SPARC is an international alliance of over 200 college and research libraries building a more competitive scholarly communication marketplace to address the high cost of information. It was created as an initiative of the Association of Research Libraries. For more information about SPARC, link to <http://www.arl.org/sparc/>

TRLN is a collaborative organization of Duke University, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Through cooperative efforts TRLN marshals the financial, human and information resources of its libraries to create a rich knowledge environment that furthers the universities' teaching, research and service missions. For more information about TRLN, link to <http://www.trln.org/>

COPYRIGHT CONCERNS IN THE AGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

A new ERIC Digest from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education (ERIC-HE) addresses some complex copyright questions related to distance education. "Copyright Concerns in the Age of Distance Education," by law librarian James H. Walther, is available online, in PDF format, at <http://www.eric.org/digests/2000-9.pdf>

ERIC-HE is one of sixteen Clearinghouses funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a part of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) System. The Clearinghouse is also a Sponsored Research Project for the George Washington University. ERIC is funded by the National Library of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement. For more information about ERIC-HE see their website at <http://www.eric.org/>

REPORT ON USING THE INTERNET FOR LEARNING

The U.S. Department of Education has recently placed the final report of the Web-Based Education Commission to the President and the Congress of the United States (WBEC) online. The report, *The Power of the Internet for Learning: Moving from Promise to Practice*, constitutes the "most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of education and the Internet."

Some of the WBEC's recommendations include:

- Make powerful new Internet resources, especially broadband access, widely and equitably available and affordable for all learners
- Provide continuous and relevant training and support for educators and administrators at all levels
- Build a new research framework of how people learn in the Internet age
- Revise outdated regulations that impede innovation
- Sustain funding--via traditional and new sources--that is adequate to the challenge at hand. Technology is expensive, and web-based learning is no exception.

The full text of the 169-page report is available online in PDF format at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/AC/WBEC/FinalReport/>

CHALLENGES FACING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

From January to June 2000, U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) conducted "dialogue sessions" with over 75 groups with interests in higher education (college and university presidents and faculty, trade and proprietary school executives, students, parents, community members, business and technology leaders). The groups were asked three broad questions:

1. What are the most significant opportunities and challenges facing American postsecondary education in the next five years?
2. What are the appropriate roles for the U.S. Department of Education in postsecondary education?
3. How can the U.S. Department of Education best maintain a continuing dialogue with all those who have a stake in postsecondary education?

The responses of these groups are available in the OPE's report, *Learning Without Limits*, which is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/AgenProj/report/index.html>

OPE will schedule several public hearings this year to hear reactions to this report.

For more information about OPE and its programs, visit the OPE website at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/>

INFOBITS SUBSCRIBERS -- WHERE ARE WE IN 2001?

Each January issue of *Infobits* includes an annual subscriber tally listing the countries represented by our subscribers. As of January 2, 2001, there were 5,453 subscribers. Here are some brief statistics about our current subscribers:

The majority of the subscribers are in the United States (2,917) and other English-speaking countries: Canada (390), Australia (226), and the United Kingdom (146).

Each of the following countries has between eleven and fifty subscribers:

Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and Spain.

The following countries have ten or fewer subscribers:

Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

In addition to subscribers that we can positively identify by a geographic location, 833 subscribers are from commercial sites, 141 subscribers are from .org sites, and 351 are from .net sites, none of which have been attributed to a particular country.

Many thanks to all the subscribers for your support in 2000!

-- Carolyn Kotlas, *CIT Infobits* Editor