

### 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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### PITFALLS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNET RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS

"As courses incorporate more instructional technology, traditional undergraduate research assignments are adapting to reflect the changing world of information and information access. New library assignments reflect this shift as well, with term papers and research projects asking students to use Web sites as an information resource, in addition to the standard literature of periodicals and monographs. But the many pitfalls the library profession has learned in its own metamorphosis during the past decade are often repeated in these newer course assignments." In "Designing Internet Research Assignments: Building a Framework for Instructor Collaboration" (*Information Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, October 2000), David Ward and Sarah Reisinger, librarians at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, discuss the pitfalls of using the Internet as a research tool, the types of Internet-related assignments that instructors assign to students, and how librarians can meet the challenges of poorly-formulated assignments. Although the article's main audience is reference library staff, instructors may find the sample assignments' forms useful in their teaching. The article is online at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~is/publications/infres/paper89.html>

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### SHOULD YOU PUBLISH IN E-JOURNALS?

Aldrin E. Sweeney, assistant professor of science education at the University of Central Florida, surveyed faculty and administrators and found they are still on the fence about e-journals. Some of the questions Sweeney's survey asked included: Is the peer-review process as thorough in electronic journals as with paper? Does electronic publishing undermine the integrity of academic rigor? Should

electronically-published articles be counted in the tenure and promotion process?

The respondents' comments and the survey findings are summarized in "Should You Publish in Electronic Journals?" (*The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, vol. 6, issue 2, December 2000). The article is online at <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/06-02/sweeney.html>

*The Journal of Electronic Publishing* [ISSN 1080-2711] is published free of charge on the Web by the University of Michigan Press, 839 Greene Street, P.O. Box 1104, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1104 USA. For more information contact JEP: email: [jep@umich.press.edu](mailto:jep@umich.press.edu); Web: <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/>

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## THE PERILS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

In the December 2000 issue of *Z Magazine*, E. Wayne Ross, professor of education at the State University of New York at Binghamton, asks "Can computer-mediated interaction substitute for the human interaction/experience that is at the heart of learning?" A synopsis of the article is available on the *Chronicle of Higher Education* website at <http://chronicle.com/free/2000/12/2000120701j.htm>

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Z, a monthly magazine featuring analysis, commentary, and humor on politics, economics, culture, and foreign policy, is published by Z Magazine, 18 Millfield St., Woods Hole, MA 02543 USA; Web: <http://zena.secureforum.com/Znet/zmag/index.htm>

Annual subscriptions are \$30 (US); \$40 (Canada & Mexico); \$50 (all other countries). Selected articles are on the Web at <http://zena.secureforum.com/Znet/zmag/zmag.cfm>

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## FALL 2000 EDUCATION STATISTICS QUARTERLY

The latest issue of the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics's (NCES) *Education Statistics Quarterly* (vol. 2, issue 3, Fall 2000) is now available on the Web. Featured articles include:

- Projections of Education Statistics to 2010
- The Baby Boom Echo Goes to College - by the Millions
- Meeting Greater Expectations and Greater Needs for Education Data

The complete publication is online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/quarterly/fall/>

NCES is part of the U.S. Department of Education and is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data that are related to education in the United States and other nations. For more information about NCES and its other services and products, contact: National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 USA; tel: 202-502-7300; fax: 202-502-7466; Web: <http://nces.ed.gov/>

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME? DEPENDS ON WHOM YOU ASK

In "It's Education. It's Online. It's Someplace You Aren't. What Do You Call It?" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 2000), Dan Carnevale reports on a Internet survey, conducted by the MASIE Center, of 2,227 learning-and-training professionals. Respondents were asked what term they and their

students used to describe "learning with technology." "Among people who work for institutions and vendors that offer course material, 40 percent prefer 'e-learning' -- more than use any other term. But a plurality of students -- 21 percent -- say 'computer-based training.' About 10 percent of students say 'e-learning.'" You can read the entire article online at <http://chronicle.com/free/2000/12/2000120801u.htm>

The MASIE Center is an international think tank dedicated to exploring the intersection of learning and technology. The Center focuses on how people learn to use technology and how technology can be used to help people learn. For more information see <http://www.masie.com/>

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## PROFESSOR TO GET COMPUTER CHIP IMPLANT

As part of an experiment to see if people can use computers to enhance the human brain, Professor Kevin Warwick plans to have a silicon chip implanted in his left arm. Warwick is head of the Cybernetics Department at the University of Reading; his main research interests are in the field of intelligent robotics, intelligent control, and artificial life.

The chip will exchange signals between Warwick's brain and a computer. "Once the chip is activated, scientists will experiment with signals associated with motion and pain. When Warwick moves a body part, the signal will be sent to the computer. It is hoped that the computer will record and successfully replicate the movement by sending a signal back to Warwick." For more information about Warwick's project see <http://www.cnn.com/2000/TECH/computing/12/07/robot.man/index.html>

For information about Warwick's earlier implant project link to <http://www.cyber.rdg.ac.uk/K.Warwick/WWW/fpage.htm>

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## 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](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu) for possible inclusion in this column.

"Don't Believe the Hype(Rtext): A Meta-Meta-Criticism of Meta-Criticism" by Curt Cloninger, in *\*spark-online.com*, issue 14.0, November 2000.

". . . hypertext literature is a wonderful subject for discourse, theory, and intellectual hobnobbing; but in the final analysis, there's really not that much to it. . . . Insofar as hypertext comprises a new literary genre, it's about as riveting as those 'write your own story' books that came out when I was a kid ('If you choose to fight the dragon, turn to page 72. If you choose to elope with the maiden, turn to page 287')." Read the entire article online at <http://www.spark-online.com/november00/discourse/cloninger.html>