

IAT INFOBITS

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About INFOBITS

Infobits is an electronic service of the Institute for Academic Technology's Information Resources Group. Each month we monitor and select from a number of information technology and instruction technology sources that come to our attention and provide brief notes for electronic dissemination to educators.

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TECHNOLOGY TOOLS FOR TODAY'S CAMPUSES

"Technology Tools for Today's Campuses" is an anthology of 72 articles collected by James L. Morrison, editor of *On the Horizon* and a professor of educational leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The essays offer testimonies on how faculty brought technology to their classrooms and include important and useful information that you can use in deciding if you want to use such tools as listservs, email, the World Wide Web, or multi-user domains (MUDs) in your teaching. Each article has links to such illustrative material as syllabi, student papers written on the Web, and reference sites.

The collection is available on the Web at <http://sunsite.unc.edu/horizon/mono/CD/>

On the Horizon [ISSN 1085-4959] is published six times a year by Jossey-Bass Publishers. Annual subscriptions are available for \$42/individual, \$70/institutions, \$165/site licenses from Jossey-Bass, Inc., 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104 USA; tel: 415-433-1740.

PHI BETA CYBER

Four years ago Peterson's "Distance Learning" guide counted 93 "cyberschools" where students could earn degrees without setting foot on campus. In 1997, the list had grown to 762. In "I Got My Degree Through E-Mail" [June 16, 1997 issue of *Forbes*], Lisa Gubernick and Ashlea Ebeling chart the rise of virtual colleges and summarize the reasons why the number of students who choose non-traditional paths to getting an education is increasing dramatically. The authors present viewpoints ranging from economists who hail cyberschools as the best solution for college education, to advocates for the superiority of in-residence programs. A list of *Forbes'* top 20 cyber-universities, along with Web links, is included in the article. The article is available online at <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/97/0616/5912084a.htm>

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PUSHING AHEAD IN ACADEME

Commercial Internet content providers are hailing "push technology" as a new way to direct information to users, rather than waiting for the users to find their information using search engines. Current implementations of push technology work by periodically downloading and caching data on the user's computer. The data sent can be tailored to the user's interests using a profile of preferences that the user has created. Theoretically, this can lead to users receiving more relevant data in a more timely fashion with less effort. Push technology users still report problems of information overload and irrelevant information, but future developments may iron out these concerns.

How will push technology affect colleges and universities? This fall, PointCast, a major push technology company, is creating the PointCast College Network, which will supply campuses with the software and channels to enable them to push local information (news, announcements, sports scores, and other time-sensitive data that changes frequently) to all computers linked to the campus network. In exchange, PointCast will also provide channels that carry advertising targeted to students.

Will push technology have a role on campus beyond that of an electronic bulletin board? If we open our campuses to a technology heavily oriented toward delivering advertising content, can we find a way to "co-opt" it for educational purposes? Can push technology become another tool that educators can use to deliver instructional materials to networked learners? Can it serve a purpose beyond showing students how to spend their time and money?

To learn more about push technology, check out these resources:

"The Advantages and Disadvantages of Push Technology." *Inside the Internet* 4, no. 7 (July 1997): 1-3.
Outlines the problems that push technology may introduce into an organization.

Barnes, Bill. "Push Me, Pull You: A Guide to 'Push'--the Internet's Big Thing of the Moment." *Slate*, December 19, 1996.

Available online: <http://www.slate.com/Webhead/96-12-19/WebHead.asp>

Brief overview of push technology providers.

Haight, Tim. "Please Don't Push Me Into Overload." *NetGuide* 4, no. 5 (May 1997): 59-60.

Available online: <http://www.techweb.com/se/directlink.cgi?NTG19970501S0048>

One user's experiences with push technologies.

Johnson, Steven. "Paradigm Shtick." *Feed*, February 28, 1997.

Available online: <http://www.feedmag.com/97.02johnson/97.02johnson.html>

A critical look at the promises of push technology.

"Kill Your Browser." *Wired* 5, no. 3 (March 1997): cover, 12-23.

Available online: http://www.wired.com/wired/5.03/features/ff_push.html

How push technology will change other media-delivery technologies.

Lidsky, David. "Online Content: The Web Delivers." *PC Magazine* 16, no. 4 (February 18): 128-30, 135-39, 143.

Available online: http://www8.zdnet.com/pcmag/features/push/_open.htm

Reviews eleven push technology software products.

PointCast, Inc.

<http://www.pointcast.com/>

Young, Jeffrey R. "Internet 'Push' Provider Plans to Offer Campus Service." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 43, no. 39 (June 6, 1997): A23.

Article on PointCast's proposed PointCast College Network.

PUBLICATION QUALITY OVER FORMAT FOR TENURE CONSIDERATION

The question of how much weight electronic publication has in determining tenure is a concern for many faculty.

Rutgers University has established a Committee on Electronic Publishing and Tenure to help clarify the university's position. In a report prepared in April and currently under discussion within the university, the committee "found both at Rutgers and nationally a primary concern for quality control in scholarship as manifested by peer review, and an indifference to format (electronic or print) as long as the quality is evident and the contribution is widely accessible now and over time." The committee urged focusing on the content's quality and the review process and taking a flexible approach to new publication modes, rather than fixating on the publication's format or medium.

The complete text of the report is available on the Web at <http://aultnis.rutgers.edu/texts/ept.html>

INFO GLUT: SYMPTOMS AND SOURCES

In "Data Smog: Surviving the Info Glut" [*Technology Review*, vol. 100, no. 4, May/June 1997, pp. 18-26] David Shenk suggests that "the ability to churn out ever greater volumes of information in a variety of formats has exceeded our ability to process it." He offers some practical ways to deal with information anxiety and exert more control over the flood of information that we receive and create. The article is adapted from the book of the same title published in April by HarperEdge/HarperCollins, ISBN: 0-06-018701-8. HarperCollins has a Web page for the book at <http://www.harpercollins.com/harperedge/shenkh.htm>

Interestingly, in the same issue of *Technology Review*, Herb Brody reviews several "webzines," a publication form that is making a large contribution to the info glut problem. "Clicking onto Webzines" (pp. 38-47) critiques and compares *Slate*, *Feed*, *HotWired*, *Salon*, and others. The article is available online at <http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena/org/t/techreview/www/articles/mj97/brody.html>

The Web version of the article includes links to all the webzines mentioned, along with links to lists of other electronic zines on the Web.

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INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

Inquiry.com is a free information service for information technology professionals. Users can perform searches for information on networking hardware and software, object-oriented and procedural development tools, relational and object-oriented database products, report writers, QA and test systems, and Internet authoring tools. Sources include both vendor literature and a variety of computer magazines and journals. In addition to user searches, the site provides a collection of guides on several hot technology topics. "Ten-Minute Solutions" includes commentary from Inquiry.com technology specialists, product summaries, and key articles on the topic. If you cannot find answers either from the guides or by searching, the site also offers an "Ask the Pro" feature where you can ask questions of resident professionals and browse through previously-answered questions.

Link to Inquiry.com at <http://www.inquiry.com>

LIBRARIAN'S LINKS

There are an increasing number of museums with Web sites that supply useful information to those who are able to visit the museum in person. Their sites list hours of operation and membership plans, provide announcements of current and upcoming exhibitions, furnish online museum shop catalogs, and reproduce selections from their collections. However, some museums also use the Web to extend their educational outreach activities and include educational materials that can be used by "virtual visitors" as well as those who plan to tour the museum in person. A new IAT Information Resource Guide, "Online Educational Materials at Museum, Gallery, and Aquarium Web Sites," provides links to these materials. This guide is not yet-another-list of Web sites maintained by museums, etc., such as

can be found on Yahoo! Each site was selected because of its online educational materials, available for use on site or for downloading by teachers. Materials, primarily for the K-12 education levels, include lesson plans, resource documents, virtual exhibits, bibliographies, and student activities. The new resource guide is located at <http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-48.html>

Jane Duff Harris' guide to music resources on the Web has been updated and expanded this month and has moved to a new location. "Music Link Library" (formerly titled "Online Music Scholarship Resources") is now at <http://scribe.iat.unc.edu/campus/music/muslinks.nsf>

Some new items have been added to "Computers and Copyrights: Bibliography" at <http://www.unc.edu/cit/guides/irg-04.html>

EDITOR'S NOTE: HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

This issue of *IAT Infobits* marks the completion of four years of publication. When I began this project, I had no idea that this newsletter would continue so long or that the readership would grow so phenomenally. Beginning with a hundred or so subscribers in 1993, the list has steadily grown to nearly 5,000 subscribers.

The technology reported on has also changed dramatically. The lead article in the first issue heralded "an intriguing new tool for managing the cornucopia of information linked to the Internet." That tool was the now-ubiquitous World Wide Web. Nearly every *Infobits* article now contains links to Web sites as a matter of course.

The success of this newsletter is a consequence not only of the abiding support of the IAT administration, but also of the continued interest by the readers, their suggestions for articles, and their kind words of encouragement. I hope that I can continue to be of service to you all for many more years to come.

URL: <http://www.unc.edu/cit/infobits/bitjun97.html>

Infobits editor: [Carolyn Kotlas](#)

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