

**Issue 55**

**January 2003**

**ISSN 1521-9275**

## 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.

[The Pursuit of Well-Structured Content](#)

[The TEACH Act and Distance Education](#)

[Is Instructional Technology a Must for Learning?](#)

[Distance Education Students and Attrition Rates](#)

[Virtual Technical Reports Center](#)

[Recommended Reading](#)

[Editor's Request for Information](#)

[Infobits Subscribers -- Where Are We in 2003?](#)

---

## THE PURSUIT OF WELL-STRUCTURED CONTENT

"Just as being an expert in your discipline is not by itself a guarantee of good pedagogy, your best-laid technology plans might miss the mark if they are not fine-tuned to the content you wish to present. And the best technology strategies benefit from semantically clear, structured content." In "Designing for Learning: The Pursuit of Well-Structured Content" (*Syllabus*, vol. 16, no. 6, January 2003, pp. 10-13), instructional designer Judith V. Boettcher provides guidelines for designing well-structured course content which takes into account what the instructor wants to cover and the level of understanding that the students bring to the course. The article is available online at <http://www.syllabus.com/article.asp?id=7092>

*Syllabus* [ISSN 1089-5914] is published monthly by 101communications, LLC, 9121 Oakdale Avenue, Suite 101, Chatsworth, CA 91311 USA; tel: 650-941-1765; fax: 650-941-1785; email:

[info@syllabus.com](mailto:info@syllabus.com); Web: <http://www.syllabus.com/>

Annual subscriptions are free to individuals who work in colleges, universities, and high schools in the U.S.; go to <http://subscribe.101com.com/syllabus/> for more information.

---

## THE TEACH ACT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act (TEACH) was signed into law (P.L. 107-273) on November 2, 2002, as part of the Department of Justice Authorization bill, H.R. 2215. According to the American Library Association, "The TEACH Act is a clear signal that Congress recognizes the importance of distance education, the significance of digital media, and the need to resolve copyright clashes." The act attempts to extend to distance education some of the same rights that on-site classes have enjoyed. For more information on TEACH, see the following resources:

"New Copyright Law for Distance Education: The Meaning and Importance of the TEACH Act"

American Library Association's TEACH website  
<http://www.ala.org/washoff/teach.html>

"The TEACH Toolkit: An Online Resource for Understanding Copyright and Distance Education" Website created by North Carolina State University Libraries, NCSU Office of Legal Affairs, et al.  
<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/scc/legislative/teachkit/index.html>

"The TEACH Act Finally Becomes Law" by Georgia Harper, University of Texas System Office of General Counsel  
<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/teachact.htm>

Chart comparing the old Section 110(2) and the new Section 110(2) by Lolly Gasaway, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Law  
<http://www.unc.edu/~uncclng/TEACH.htm>

Text of the Act  
<http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/pl107-273.html>

---

## IS INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY A MUST FOR LEARNING?

"Technologies and Learning" is the theme of both the January/March 2003 issue of *TechKnowLogia* and a new book co-edited by the journal's editor. Articles for the journal include:

"Does This Stuff Work? A Review of Technology Used to Teach" by J. D. Fletcher, Institute for Defense Analyses

"e-Learning - The New Frontier in the Developing World" by Cheick Kante and Vishal Savani, World Links

"Raising Achievement and Lowering Costs with Technology in Higher Education" by Gregg B. Jackson, The George Washington University

The complete issue is available online at <http://www.techknowlogia.org/>

*TechKnowLogia* is published quarterly by Knowledge Enterprise, Inc., P.O. Box 3027, Oakton, VA 22124 USA; fax: 703-242-2279; email: [techknowlogia@knowledgeenterprise.org](mailto:techknowlogia@knowledgeenterprise.org); Web: <http://www.techknowlogia.org/>

Publication is in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Subscriptions are free, but readers must first register to gain access to articles. Readers will then be notified by email when new issues are published.

*Technologies and Learning: Potential, Parameters, and Prospects* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002; ISBN 0-89492-112-6), edited by Wadi D. Haddad and Alexandra Draxler, draws "on the wealth of worldwide knowledge and experience, this book outlines the rationales and realities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for education, examines the options and choices for applying them, and summarizes a series of case studies that illustrate modalities of integrating ICTs into learning systems in different settings." The entire book is available (in PDF format) on the Web. You can read chapters or download the complete text from <http://www.aed.org/publications/TechEdInfo.html>.

---

## DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS AND ATTRITION RATES

The growth of distance education has been accompanied by high attrition rates. Since college and university funding depends on enrollment, understanding the underlying causes of attrition is extremely important. In "Identifying Predictors of Academic Persistence in Distance Education" (*USDLA Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 2003), Angie Parker, Associate Dean of Distributed Learning for Yavapai College, describes her research into attrition rates in distance education programs. Her study indicates that there is a correlation between locus of control (the level of self-motivation) and academic persistence. The complete article is available online at [http://www.usdla.org/html/journal/JAN03\\_Issue/article06.html](http://www.usdla.org/html/journal/JAN03_Issue/article06.html)

*USDLA Journal* [ISSN 1537-5080] is a refereed journal of the United States Distance Learning Association. Current and back issues are available on the Web at <http://www.usdla.org/html/resources/usdlaJournal/currentIssues.htm>.

USDLA is a non-profit organization, founded in 1987 as the leading organization serving the distance learning community. The USDLA promotes the development and application of distance learning for education and training. USDLA represents nearly 2500 members involved with pre-K through 12 education, higher education, continuing education, home schooling, corporate training, telemedicine and military and government training. For more information contact: USDLA, 140 Gould Street, Suite 200B, Needham, MA 02494 USA; tel: 800-275-5162; fax: 781-453-2389; email: [information@usdla.org](mailto:information@usdla.org); Web: <http://www.usdla.org/>.

---

## VIRTUAL TECHNICAL REPORTS CENTER

The University of Maryland Libraries' Virtual Technical Reports Center provides extensive links to collections of full-text reports or extended abstracts that other institutions make available on the Web. These materials cover a vast range of disciplines. The site links to technical reports, preprints, reprints, dissertations, theses, and research reports, and is updated monthly. Visit the Virtual Technical Reports Center at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/ENGIN/TechReports/Virtual-TechReports.html>.

For more information or to suggest additional links, contact: Gloria Lyles Chawla; email: [gc9@umail.umd.edu](mailto:gc9@umail.umd.edu).

---

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

Tom Wilson, Editor-in-Chief of *Information Research* journal, announces that Terrence A. Brooks, Associate Professor in the University of Washington's Information School, has agreed to write an occasional column for the online journal. Brooks's areas of teaching and research include Internet technologies and applications. His first column is devoted to "Web services," and is available at <http://informationr.net/ir/8-1/TB0211.html>.

---

## EDITOR'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

In my search for information to share with readers, I have come across newsletters that are similar to *Infobits*. I would like to compile a list of these online newsletters that are devoted to instructional technology in higher education. If you know of such a newsletter, please email me the publication's title

and URL. If you are the publisher, the following information would also be welcome:

Publisher name

Type of publisher (individual, educational institution, non-profit, government, commercial)

Frequency

Format (email as well as web version)

Cost

ISSN

When it's completed, I will make the list available on the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for Instructional Technology website and announce the location in a future issue of *CIT Infobits*.

Thank you,

Carolyn Kotlas, *CIT Infobits* Editor

[kotlas@email.unc.edu](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu)

---

## INFOBITS SUBSCRIBERS -- WHERE ARE WE IN 2003?

Each January issue of *Infobits* includes an annual subscriber tally listing the countries represented by our subscribers. As of January 13, 2003, there were 6,562 subscribers. Here are some brief statistics about our current subscribers:

The majority of the subscribers whose country we could identify are in the United States (3,209) and other English-speaking countries: Canada (438), Australia (238), and the United Kingdom (161).

Each of the following countries has between eleven and fifty subscribers: Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, 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, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, 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, Venezuela.

In addition to subscribers who we can positively identify by a geographic location, 1,378 subscribers are from commercial sites, 171 subscribers are from .org or .int sites, and 479 are from .net sites, none of which have been attributed to a particular country.

Many thanks to all the subscribers for your support in 2002!

-- Carolyn Kotlas, *CIT Infobits* Editor