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ONLINE INSTRUCTORS AND BURNOUT

"The growth of distance education in higher education establishes a need to examine burnout specific to online instructors. Although burnout among educators has been studied, no specific work has been conducted relative to burnout among higher education online instructors."

A 2005 study of 76 online instructors by R. Lance Hogan and Mark A. McKnight explored burnout in this segment of educators. Their research sought answers to three questions:

"To what degree does burnout occur in higher education online instructors?"

"Is there a significant relationship between gender and burnout level of higher education online instructors?"

"How do measures of burnout among higher education online instructors compare with the existing normative data of educators?"

Their findings are reported in "Exploring Burnout among University Online Instructors: An Initial Investigation" (*The Internet and Higher Education*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2007). The paper is available on the Web at <http://www.usi.edu/business/mamcknight/publications/INTHIG281.pdf>.

The Internet and Higher Education [ISSN 1096-7516] is a peer-reviewed journal published quarterly by Pergamon, an imprint of Elsevier. It is "devoted to addressing contemporary issues and future developments related to online learning, teaching, and administration on the Internet in post-secondary settings." For more information, see

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/620187/description.

STUDIES OF STUDENTS AND IT

Since 2004, the EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) has conducted longitudinal studies of students and information technology. The latest report, "The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, 2007," presents data from a spring 2007 survey and interviews with nearly 28,000 freshman, senior, and community college students at 103 higher education

institutions. Some of the findings from this year's study include:

-- "Today's students spend a lot of time online. Respondents report spending an average of 18 hours per week actively doing online activities for work, school, or recreation, and 6.6 percent (more often male) spend more than 40 hours per week."

-- Students surveyed "overwhelmingly (85.1 percent) favor e-mail for official college and university communications. . . . A resounding 82.5 percent say they prefer a university account" rather than a commercial account for these communications.

-- "While most respondents are enthusiastic IT users and use it to support many aspects of their academic lives, most prefer only a 'moderate' amount of IT in their courses (59.3 percent)."

The research bulletin is available online at <http://www.educause.edu/ers0706>.

ECAR "provides timely research and analysis to help higher education leaders make better decisions about information technology. ECAR assembles leading scholars, practitioners, researchers, and analysts to focus on issues of critical importance to higher education, many of which carry increasingly complicated and consequential implications." For more information go to http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?SECTION_ID=4.

Other Related Studies:

- "Faculty Integration of Technology into Instruction and Students' Perceptions of Computer Technology to Improve Student Learning"
By Jared Keengwe
Journal of Information Technology Education, vol. 6, 2007
<http://jite.org/documents/Vol6/JITEv6p169-180Keengwe218.pdf>

"[R]eports indicate that faculty members are not integrating technology into instruction in ways that make a difference in student learning. To help faculty make informed decisions on student learning, there is need for current knowledge of faculty integration practices. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the relationship between faculty integration of technology into classroom instruction and students' perceptions of the effect of computer technology to improve their learning."

Current and back issues of the *Journal of Information Technology Education (JITE)* [ISSN 1539-3585 (online) 1547-9714 (print)] are available free of charge at <http://jite.org/>. The peer-reviewed journal is published annually by the Informing Science Institute. For more information contact: Informing Science Institute, 131 Brookhill Court, Santa Rosa, California 95409 USA; tel: 707-531-4925; fax: 480-247-5724; Web: <http://informingscience.org/>.

- "Student Expectations Study: Key Findings from Online Research and Discussion Evenings Help in June 2007 for the Joint Information Systems Committee"
July 2007
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/studentexpectations.pdf>

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) is a strategic advisory committee working on behalf of the funding bodies for further and higher

education in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. For more information on JISC, see <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>.

TIPS FOR ONLINE TEACHING

Rosemary Lehman and Richard Berg's book *147 Practical Tips for Synchronous and Blended Technology Teaching and Learning* has recently been published. The authors draw on their extensive experience in distance education at Instructional Communications Systems, University of Wisconsin-Extension. Tips range from initial planning for synchronous or blended technologies, through developing and implementing programs, to evaluating the results.

The book's table of contents, purchasing information, and a link to the authors' companion website and blog are available at <http://www.atwoodpublishing.com/books/295.htm>.

147 Practical Tips for Synchronous and Blended Technology Teaching and Learning

By Rosemary M. Lehman and Richard A. Berg
Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing, 2007
ISBN: 978-1-891859-69-4
\$12.50 paperback

CREATIVE COMMONS CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Creative Commons (CC) is a nonprofit organization that offers flexible copyright licenses for creative works. This year it celebrates five years of giving intellectual property owners alternatives for sharing their work.

To read about future CC projects and for more information about Creative Commons licenses go to <http://creativecommons.org/>.

NEW VERSION OF bFREE AVAILABLE

bFree, developed by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Information Technology Services' Teaching and Learning division and announced in the March 2007 *TL Infobits* (<http://its.unc.edu/tl/infobits/bitmar07.php#1>), is a course extractor that makes a stand-alone website from any Blackboard course content. The tool has recently been updated. The interface is easier to use and the program now extracts more types of course materials.

To learn more about bFree or to download the program, go to <http://its.unc.edu/tl/tli/bFree>.

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.

"Damn Spam: The Losing War on Junk E-Mail"

By Michael Specter

The New Yorker, August 6, 2007

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/08/06/070806fa_fact_specter

Specter charts the history of spam email from its beginnings in the 1970s to the present. Spam haters will find no predictions of relief from the onslaught. The spammers are at least one step ahead of filters and trappers designed to ward off their messages:

"Last year, spammers began to take advantage of the fact that computers can't see, and buried their messages in images. Most filters look for words and phrases or Internet address information. A picture contains so much more data that it is hard for the computer to find the message embedded in all the noise. Humans who click on the message have no trouble seeing it, though. Image spam consumes far more bandwidth than written messages, and that means it will devour even more space on computer servers throughout the world, costing more money and wasting more time. But spammers aren't stopping there. They are learning to send out polymorphic spam, thousands of variations of the same message, which makes each message unique and therefore hard to categorize."

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