



VITALNews

Virginia Initiative for
Technology and
Administrative Leadership

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Where the World Meets

I woke with horror at the stories of the bombs in London. The network news ran out of information pretty quickly so kept repeating the same information, talking to reporters on the scene who repeated the same information, and then cutting away to experts who didn't know anything new but were willing to speculate on the old information. Since I do not get a 24-hours news cable channel—I know that's hard to believe but I can assure you there is at least one home in America that doesn't get CCN—I turned to the web to see what was going on.

Google News, of course, provided the headlines. But, in addition to being able to get the news, I was able to be part of the grass roots conversation as well, as [London bloggers did what comes naturally](#) and started logging on to record their experiences, reaching out to the online community for support.

As I looked at the pictures posted to [Flickr](#) and

at the [BBC site](#), I couldn't help feeling a little like a rubbernecker on the highway. I realized though that this is the stuff of historians, the primary sources that tell the stories of the event, each moment experienced in different ways by each individual. Blogs and slideshows help record those stories. Bloggers weave their tales on the web, writing their own histories.

Elsewhere, people write the story collaboratively...you could watch the story unfolding at [Wikipedia](#) that awful day as contributors added their bits and pieces to the larger picture. [Blogger Will Richardson](#) has describes the development of the Wikipedia article.

What happened in London is just horrible, and we grieve with those whose lives will never be the same. But we also thank them for sharing their stories with us...

*Happy surfing,
Karen*

Virginia Elementary School Honored for Technology

WHRO announced recently that D. J. Montague Elementary School, a member of the Williamsburg-James City County Public School system, was named the first recipient of the Vernon M. Geddy, Jr. Technology School of the Year award.

The Vernon M. Geddy, Jr. Technology School of the Year, established by WHRO by its Board of Directors in April 2004, recognizes the regional public school perceived as most effectively integrating technology into the curriculum, as well as increasing overall school efficiencies. Relative size, budget, community partnerships and special circumstances are considered in awarding the honor. Nominations were solicited through the HRETA Superintendents Advisory Council, initiating in the Spring meeting (March 22 in 2005). Nominations closed on May 1, 2005.

The award was presented at HRETA's June 22nd Education Advisory Committee Meeting and the school was recognized again before the WHRO Board of Directors on June 28th.

The winning school, D. J. Montague Elementary, showcased extensive technology integration within their school, from hardware, training of teachers, to the impact of technology on school SOL test scores and the way that school serves as a recognized role model. D. J. Montague's principal is Mr. Lawrence Walk.

According to Mr. Walk, the school's participation with The College of William and Mary in a PT3 grant "was most beneficial to our staff and provided the skills needed to sustain our efforts beyond the life of the original grant." Walk went on to comment that the school was "very pleased to have won this award and owe a debt of gratitude to our entire staff for their hard work and dedication. The theme of the award is "Technology Integration," and we believe we excel in this capacity. Equally important to us in the application process was a section asking how we shared our information with others. As was noted, the D.J. Montague staff has gained great fulfillment by "Giving Away" our

knowledge to personnel within our school division as well as to others through local, state, and national workshops and presentations."

In fact, several 5th grade students from DJ Montague along with teachers Robb Moff and Charlie Morse presented at the recent National Educational Computing Conference held in Philadelphia. The students talked about the way they used technology and showed off the [school's website](#).

The award is named in honor of Mr. Geddy, a Williamsburg attorney and former Mayor of the City of Williamsburg, whose advocacy for education and commitment to the region are well known. Mr. Geddy served for many years on the governing Board of Directors of the Hampton Roads Educational Telecommunications Association (HRETA), which does business as WHRO. He served on several of its committees, including the Executive, Audit & Finance and Nominating committees. In addition, he was a charter member of the WHRO Foundation.

Educators Win Governor's Technology Award

Governor Mark Warner honored nine teachers at the Fifth Annual Governor's Innovative Technology In Education Awards during a ceremony and luncheon in Richmond in June. The awards, sponsored by America Online, Inc. (AOL) in conjunction with the Governor and the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), recognize educators who have improved instruction through the innovative use of technology.

The winners are:

- David Carroll, Pulaski County High School, Pulaski County Public Schools;
- Amy Cummings, Franklin County High School, Franklin County Public Schools;
- Leon "Buddy" Darby, Prince George High School, Prince George County Public Schools;
- Belinda Jenkins, James Solomon Russell Junior High School, Brunswick County Public Schools;
- Eric Miller, Morgan Middle School, Winchester City Public Schools;
- Tina Schuster, a U.S. Fluvanna County High School, Fluvanna County Public Schools;
- Patricia Skiles, Windsor Oaks Elementary School, Virginia Beach City Public Schools;
- Mary Swihart, Middlesex High School, Middlesex County Public Schools; and
- Karen Duffy of Fredericksburg Academy, a private school in Fredericksburg.

"In our knowledge-based economy, technology and education are critically linked to our future prosperity," Governor Warner said. "These educators understand the power of technology as a tool to enhance learning - and they are putting it to work in the classroom."

Entrants were asked to submit a technology portfolio of classroom work samples representing proficiencies, competencies, and talents in the use of educational technology and media. The portfolios were judged on technology skills, curriculum integration, research, communication,

teaching/learning styles, motivation, evaluation, and peer coaching. A winner was selected from each of the DOE's eight administrative regions and one from the private-school sector. Each winner received an unrestricted award of \$2,500 as well as 2 years of Internet service from AOL.

Governor Warner appointed a Blue Ribbon Panel to evaluate the technology portfolios that were submitted for the competition. Panel members were Cindy Charlton, with the Community Idea Stations (Commonwealth Public Broadcasting Corporation); Pat Johnson, with Wise County Public Schools; Fred Scott, with Chesterfield County Public Schools; Jill Woolley Stafford, with Prince William County Public Schools; Linda Townsend, with the National Institute for Technology Policy and Research; Dr. John Wenrich, with Connecting Science's Research to the Classroom program at Virginia Tech; and Scott Willett, account executive for Dell Computers.

Educators & Technology Come Together at NECC

As always, the [National Educational Computing Conference](#), held in Philadelphia this year, was action-packed and exciting. Bloggers and podcasters were everywhere. This year, the conference made an effort to present student voices so there seemed to be kids everywhere, doing demonstrations, talking about technology, and just generally having fun. In fact, the best session I went to included four high school students from Philadelphia and New York talking about how technology has impacted their lives both in and out of school.

Even if you didn't get to the conference, you can access some of the resources online including [a list of bloggers who covered the event](#).

As usual, I spent most of my time in the Exhibit Hall. I enjoyed talking to a graduate student from UVA about using digital cameras with microscopes and telescopes and can't wait for a clear night to do some star shooting. Of course, all the **big** names are there from Microsoft to Apple to Scholastic and more. The rest of this article highlights a few of the cool things I found...

Polar Physical Education Products

Often, we tend to think about technology integration as it relates to core content areas like math or science. But Polar makes technology for the physical education classroom. The company designs and sells heart rate monitors and health assessment systems. The software interface provides PE teachers with real-time data about their students, allowing them to more easily track student fitness. Their PE Manager software, in particular, can be used as a data collection and grading tool, taking into account the types of grades often used in gym from attendance to attire to skills. [Learn more at the Polar website](#).

Learning Foreign Languages Online

Two companies were demonstrating foreign language software.

Power-Glide uses a game-based curriculum with an adventure theme to help students learn Spanish, German, French and Latin. One technique—Diglot Weaves—uses a mix of the native and foreign language

that helps students learn words in context. While the content can be accessed online, the site also sells audio flashcards and activity books. [Learn more here](#).

Rosetta Stone has been helping people learn new languages for a long time. Users can choose from over 120 world languages. The program is available either online or in CD ROM format and can be used by schools as well as individuals. [Learn more here](#).

Teacher Websites Made Easy

How many teachers have I taught to make websites?? 200? How many of them ever published them?? 50? And, most importantly, how many of them still use the site? I don't even want to guess. So, I was particularly excited about ClassWebs.net, a company that makes it easy for teachers to create and maintain websites for their classrooms. What makes it different than a free site? For one, it includes an online lesson builder. Plus, it makes publishing student work simple. And, the annual fee of \$25 is really quite reasonable. [Check it out here!](#)

Selected Shorts: Helpful Links for Educators



TRT Handbook Available From VADOE

The Virginia Department of Education recently published *The Handbook for Instructional Technology Resource Teacher and Technology Support Positions*.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide guidance as administrators begin to hire Instructional Technology Resource Teachers and Technology Support positions. The Handbook includes sample job descriptions. In addition, the Handbook includes short scenarios that help ITRTs think about the various teachers with whom they will be working.

The Handbook is available at the [Division of Technology and Human Resources homepage](#). Look for the link to the pdf file.

Encyclopedia of Educational Technology

This free online encyclopedia includes short multimedia articles on a variety of topics related to the fields of instructional design and education and training.

According to the website, the encyclopedia is designed for students and novice to intermediate practitioners in these fields, providing a brief overview as a starting point to further research on specific topics.

Sponsored by San Diego State University, the encyclopedia is written by graduate students and professors who contribute articles. You can explore the encyclopedia [at the website](#).



The Nation's Report Card Available

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the nation's report card, is often quoted by education writers and political pundits. This part year, NAEP data was at the heart of the charter school debate when it seemed to show that charter schools did not increase student achievement.

NAEP has been given periodically in a variety of subject areas since 1969. NAEP does not report on individual students; instead, it reports results for populations of students.

You can learn more about NAEP and access current and historical data [at their website](#). Currently, they are featuring the 2004 Long Term Trend results.

CaseNEX Uses Case Studies for Training

“There is no need to invent artificial challenges for teachers. Real life in schools presents the best opportunities from which to learn.” --John Dewey

CaseNEX (originally “CaseNET”) was founded at the University of Virginia over 15 years ago and provides an online, case-based approach to professional development and teacher training. The more than one-hundred cases in the CaseNEX library concern educational life in elementary, middle, and high schools. Students participate virtually in weekly class sessions, and an online instructor, who has completed a training session sponsored by CaseNEX, guides student work.

Working from scenarios or “slices of real classroom life”, CaseNEX participants learn to apply a case-study method. The method consists of five steps for making judgments in teaching and learning situations:

1. Identifying issues, problems, dilemmas, and opportunities;
2. Recognizing multiple perspectives;

3. Calling up available knowledge;
4. Proposing actions, and
5. Forecasting consequences of such actions

(McNergney, Herbert, & Ford, 1994; McNergney & Medley, 1984).

CaseNEX at work in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Virginia

Funded by a Wallace Foundation grant, the Learning, Empowering, Assessing, and Developing (LEAD) Fairfax program seeks to identify, select, and train tomorrow’s school-based administrators in FCPS. The partnership with CaseNEX develops ongoing

training to enhance student achievement through systemic leadership change. Participating interns were among the first to be hired as new assistant principals and the sitting principals commented on their ability to apply theory to practice, their depth of understanding of current administrative topics, and their broad perspective on educational leadership issues. Now in its second year, the partnership has developed a model program with the demonstrated capacity to build tomorrow’s leaders.

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