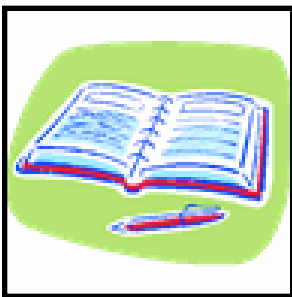




Five Years in the Making

With this issue, we begin the fifth year of publication for *VITALNews*! The format has changed a bit over the years, but the purpose--to help foster technology leadership--has stayed the same. Throughout the year, we'll be taking a peek into the past to see what's changed in the past five years. To start with, the web has changed...



When I first started writing this newsletter, we were involved in Web 1.0. Of course, we didn't know it was Web 1.0 until Web 2.0 came around. Web 1.0 was a familiar place for us consumers of information. Major content providers like

newspapers, television networks, and movie studios offered us access to expanded news and entertainment online, but it was not interactive. Just static pages, with everyone being offered the same information is the same way.

Web 2.0--also called the Read/Write Web--has changed that consumer mentality. Yes, there's still plenty to consume, but with news aggregators and portal pages, users can filter and customize the web so the page they look at when their browser opens is unique to them.

Web 2.0, however, means more than better consumption. It means taking on the role of creator. The newest tools are about users creating content, organizing the web in unique ways, and sharing that content and organization with others. I, and others,

would argue that this new creative ability makes technology much more than just a tool like a word processor or a spreadsheet. Instead, it is a thinking tool, where we collect resources along with our thoughts, where we find others with whom we can learn, and where we often discover knowledge along with ourselves.

Web 2.0 tools like blogs and wikis encourage reflection, collaboration and reaction. But like any tool, they are only useful if we learn to use them effectively and efficiently. They can only help us think and learn if we incorporate them into our classrooms and our lives in meaningful ways.

I will be the first to admit that some of these tools are mis-used and downright abused. Here's where we can take a leadership role. Rather than simply applying a stronger filter and shutting down proxy servers, we can talk about these tools with our students and our children, explore ways that they are can be used in safe and inspiring ways, and learn together how to be productive and responsible online citizens.

Conference

Calendar

Upcoming Conferences

The best place to look for educational technology conferences is at T.H.E. Journal (<http://www.thejournal.com/>). Their searchable calendar is a comprehensive guide to national and international conferences. In this space, we'll be featuring conferences of particular interest to Virginia educators.

Educational Technology Leadership Conference: November 29-December 1, 2006, Hotel Roanoke Conference Center, Roanoke, Virginia. Designed for educational technology leaders, this conference is co-sponsored by the Office of Educational Technology of the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Society for Technology in Education. This year, the theme is Technology and Learning, Virtually Everywhere. Visit the website for more information: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/OET/conf.shtml>

Virginia Society for Technology in Education: February 25-27, 2007, Virginia Beach Convention Center, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Designed for teachers, this conference focuses on instructional uses of technology. The conference features over 100 concurrent sessions and 40 hands-on workshops. The Office of Educational Technology of the Virginia Department of Education is the co-sponsor. Visit the website for more information: <http://www.vste.org/conference.html>

National Educational Computing Conference: June 24-27, 2007, Atlanta, Georgia. Thousands of educators come together once a year to talk about technology. Just amazing! And this coming year, it is close by. Plan now to send a team to this premiere educational technology conference. Visit the website for more information: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2007/>

Virtual Conferencing

I did not attend the National Educational Computing Conference in San Diego, and I hear that I missed an excellent conference. Thanks to the web, however, I can participate in the conference virtually even several months after the fact.

I started at flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>), the online photo sharing site, to discover that over 800 photos tagged necc2006 had been uploaded. Searching on necc06 yielded even more. Then, I visited technorati (<http://www.technorati.com>), where users can search the blogosphere. It seems as though everyone was using a weblog to discuss their NECC experiences. Finally, selected sessions were webcast and those archives are available at <http://www.kzowebcasting.com/necc/>. All these resources allow me to have at least a little bit of a NECC experience. It's still not as good as being there so be sure to check out the conference calendar: next year, it's in Atlanta!

Even After Five Years

We all know how temporary the World Wide Web can seem. Websites come and go, re-organize content, change their names. But, some of the sites we discussed in 2002 are still with us and worth a re-visit.

Exploravision

ExploraVision is a competition for all students in grades K–12 attending a public, private or home school in the U.S., Canada, or U.S. Territories. We first featured it in our October 2002 newsletter. Sponsored by Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), it is designed to encourage students to combine their imagination with their knowledge of science and technology to explore visions of the future. Teams of students select a technology, research how it works and why it was invented, and then project how that technology may change in the future. Visit the website to learn more about the competition and view past projects: <http://www.exploravision.org/2005/home.htm>

Finding Research

In the November 2002 issue, we featured the Center for Applied Research in Educational Technology (CARET), a warehouse for research sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education. CARET is still going strong, with research reviews related to curriculum, instruction, student learning, online teaching and learning, professional development and assessment and evaluation. Users can browse the reviews; the database is also searchable. Visit the website: <http://caret.iste.org>

CARET
Center for Applied Research in Educational Technology

Research guideposts to better technology decisions

GenYes

Generation YES works with schools all around the world to plan, implement and enhance student technology programs through innovative curriculum, online tools and research-based support services. Generation YES programs focus on student-centered, project-based experiences that impact student's lives and increase student involvement in school and community through technology. In addition, all Generation YES programs improve the use of technology in the school as a whole. First featured in December 2002, GenYes programs have expanded their scope but still focus primarily on creating student-centered experiences. Visit the website: <http://genyes.com>



Good Reads



We can't be good technology ambassadors if we aren't well-informed. And with the Internet, keeping up to date has never been easier. Each month, I'll be highlighting interesting, relevant sources from research projects to government reports and ezines to bloggers.

Technology Counts

While the No Child Left Behind Act has touched off a boom in school data collection, much work needs to be done before the vast amounts of student information can be harnessed to improve learning, according to Technology Counts 2006: The Information

Edge: Using Data to Accelerate Achievement, a new report from Education Week and the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center. For the first time ever, the annual Technology Counts report issued letter grades for all 50 states and the District of Columbia, ranking their efforts to improve access to and use of school technology and the ability of teachers to use it more effectively. While much of the report requires either a free or paid subscription, the executive summary is available at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2006/05/04/index.html>.

Just for Fun (and maybe some learning, too!)

YouTube

"Television is a new medium. It's called a medium because nothing is well-done."

Fred Allen (1894 – 1956), on the radio program The Big Show, Dec. 17, 1950

Just in case you missed it, this summer saw the meteoric rise of something called YouTube. It's a video database with a mish-mash of homemade movies, clips from television programs, and trailers for Hollywood movies. There's lots of fun and entertainment, but there's also some educational stuff going on as well. For instance, in case you missed Tom Friedman on Meet the Press a few weeks back, you can watch several clips. There are shuttle take offs and short films from the History Channel. Poke around...you'll find some downright stupid videos but you'll also find some that are funny, thought provoking and educational: <http://www.youtube.com>