



Advocating for Students

The Board of Directors of the Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE) has adopted “advocacy” as a focus area. What does that mean? It means that we want to get out the word about how educational technology is supporting powerful teaching and learning in Virginia. And, as always, we need your help.

Many of you responded to the advocacy survey we conducted last fall. Your responses gave us a sense of what you felt would help you in your classrooms, and we are using those responses to craft our advocacy message. Now, we need to know how you are already using technology to enhance instruction and increase effectiveness. We want to share those stories on our website. These do not have to be long...just a few sentences about a cool project with a link to some examples, but they will go a long way to showing off the great things that are happening in schools throughout the Commonwealth. You might also want to share your elevator speech with us: if you had five minutes alone in an elevator with a state senator what would you say about technology and the classroom?

How to Share Your Story

We are collecting these stories through VSTEOnline, VSTE’s Ning community. I’ve posted a blog entry there outlining our needs; please add your story as a comment to the blog entry. We’ve already gotten a few posts. Thank you! But, we need many more. Please share yours. You can read the post and the comments at my page on Ning: <http://vsteonline.ning.com/profile/KarenRichardson>. If you’re not a member, I encourage you to join. I know I’ve written about Ning before; the nice part of the VSTE community is that there are lots of friendly faces, a place to interact with all those smart, creative people that, in the past, you’ve only seen at the conference. (A technical note: you may be prompted for a twitter login and password at the Ning site. If you don’t have one, just press cancel. Or, maybe you need one...)

Advocacy at the Conference

There will be a special booth at the conference this year, manned by VSTE Board members. It will represent the Educational Technology Action Network (ETAN). Their website is <http://www.edtechactionnetwork.org/>. This group’s goals are to both advocate for educational technology and help others learn to be advocates. Stop by the booth to find out more about how you can be part of this important work. And, look for me with my video camera, I’d like to collect some video stories as well.

A special request: I know many of you forward these newsletter to others in your division. Please be sure to do so with this one and encourage them to share their stories.

Conference Calendar

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.



Virginia Society for Technology in Education, February 24-27, 2007, Roanoke, Virginia.

Come see how technology rocks in Virginia! This state-wide conference is now in its 22nd year. With over 1,200 attendees and a full two-and-a-half days of presentations, hands-on workshops, and the always popular extravaganza, this conference is high energy. Co-sponsored by the Virginia Society for Technology in Education and the Virginia Department of Education. Learn more at the website:

<http://www.vste.org/conference.html/>

National Educational Computing Conference, June 29-July 2, 2008, San Antonio, Texas

This is the biggie! Thousands of people from all over the world, more presentations and events than you can imagine, and technology everywhere. Registration is open and there is a tentative schedule posted at the website. If you're planning on going, now is a good time to make your hotel reservations. Here's the website for more information: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2008/>

Free Webinar Series from Don Johnston

Having trouble getting out of the office? Then, attend a conference session online. Don Johnston, the assistive technology experts, offer a series of free monthly webinars. Last year's series has been archived as well. So, take a professional development break from whatever fires are smoldering and learn something new. Here's the site: http://www.donjohnston.com/prof_services/VIP.html

K-12 Online 2007, October 22-26, 2007. Online

The second annual conference is over. But, I'm leaving this one up because you can still attend! And, you can attend last year's conference, too. It's archived at William and Mary. Go on, check it out. You can attend a conference that is over from your own desk. Don't you just love the web? Learn more at <http://k12onlineconference.org>.

Good Reads



We can't be good technology ambassadors if we aren't well-informed. Each month, I'll be highlighting interesting, relevant sources from research projects to government reports and ezines to bloggers.

Horizon Report

I featured the 2007 version of this report last month. Well, here's breaking news: the 2008 report was issued on January 29, 2008 at the Educause Conference.

This time, the technologies include grassroots video, collaboration webs, mobile broadband, data mashups, collective intelligence, and social operating systems.

But, the really interesting part is the publication process itself. The link will take

you to the wiki that was used in creating the report. There are links to all the previous reports as well as a mega-trends report that looks back over the past five year. Close your office door and start poking around:

http://horizon.nmc.org/wiki/Main_Page

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

Stagecoach Island

Money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver.

~Ayn Rand

Financial literacy is one of the "new" literacies and is focused on teaching students how to manage money. When I was teaching middle school, we did a spreadsheet simulation where students were given a profile that included a salary and family structure, and they had to make ends meet. We used the web to research expenses. Now, from Wells Fargo, a 21st century version of that project called Project Stagecoach. It started as a private island in Second Life, but now the company is offering a free software download. Users create an avatar and then work their way through lessons related to money management. They can earn money, set up savings accounts, and, soon will be able to manage credit cards. Visit the site to create a free account and start exploring:

<http://blog.wellsfargo.com/StagecoachIsland/>



More Video Viewing

Chris and I use a lot of video in our presentations. Multimedia brings together images and text that tells a more powerful story than either one alone. This month, I feature three videos that should be on everyone's viewing list.

The World is Flat at MIT

What do you mean you haven't read it yet?? He's on the third version and it only gets longer each time. I have an out for you: watch the movie. Friedman gave a talk at MIT and the video is available for free online. He reviews the basic theory and defines things like globalization 3.0 and insourcing so you can sound like you read the book. Besides, you always knew you were a visual learner, right? Here's the link: <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/266/> After you finish with Friedman, poke around the MIT World website. Sponsored by the School of Engineering, the site has lots of videos on a wide range of topics including education.

Here's the link: <http://mitworld.mit.edu/index.php>



As I was browsing at the MIT site, I found this video of a panel of media literacy experts. Facilitated by Henry Jenkins, the panel discusses how remixing--using materials usually found on the web to create a new product--contributes to education through encouraging creativity and collaboration. Be sure to visit the websites for the panel participants to learn more about the world of new media and new media literacy. Visit the site: <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/474/>

Wish He Were in My Class

I found Marty Maines in Teacher Tube. He's from Sitka, Alaska, and he's taking a pre-service educational technology course similar to the one I teach. I watched his video about crossing Baranof Island and was intrigued. Then, I watched his educational philosophy video and was impressed. It didn't take too much googling to find his weblog, which his professor is evidently using for the class. So, here's the blog:

<http://martymaines.blogspot.com/>. The island video was produced as part of a Sense of Place unit. His educational philosophy video was posted in November 2007.

Growing Up Online

I know many of you saw this Frontline special that aired recently. The program focused on the stories of several young people and their "online" lives. We've been talking about it in the VSTE Ning community. Thanks to the ease of distributing video, you can watch the program online. In addition, the website offers its own discussion forums and support materials. This video should be part of your Internet safety toolkit. Visit the website:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/>

