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Buffalo State College

EDC Newsletter

Advancing Education Through Technology

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NECC 2003

It was my good fortune to attend the recent [National Educational Computing Conference \(NECC\) 2003](#) in Seattle, WA. Presented by the [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#), the conference theme was Visions and Reflections. There were 9600 attendees, plus 1200 exhibits with thousands of salespeople, for a total of over 15,000 people. A huge conference by any measure.

Dr. Mae Jemison, former astronaut and M.D. who served in the Peace Corps in Africa, and is now a professor at Cornell University, gave the opening keynote address. It was a truly attention grabbing and awe-inspiring presentation, and clearly set the tone for the conference.

I also was in the audience for several presentations by John Bailey, the current director of educational technology in the US Department of Education. His major work in the next year will be leading the efforts on developing a national educational technology plan (NETP). For information on development of the plan, you can go to a recent article in [Education Week](#). Bailey views students as the "natives." We are the newcomers or tourists. He sees three

of the most pressing ed tech issues as database decision making, online learning and NETP. According to Bailey, we are in phase two of technology in schools as we are now trying to get educators to integrate technology into the classroom. Phase one was getting all the hardware and infrastructure in place.

Bailey's predecessor, Dr. Linda Roberts, who was the time director of educational technology under then-Secretary of Education Richard Riley in the Clinton administration, was also part of the conference. She is quoted in the Education Week article on NETP.

Even if you did not attend NECC, you can still benefit by going to <http://neccsite.org/> and reviewing the presentations from the conference that are online. Using keyword searches, you can search for PowerPoints and handouts on a wide variety of grade levels and subjects. You can also order audio recordings of many presentations.

The next NECC conference is in New Orleans, June 21-3, 2004. As a newly elected ISTE Board member, I will be there. Hope to see you there, too.

John Thompson, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Educational Computing Program

The Google Viewer: Hands-Free Searching

If you have taken any courses in the EDC Program, or just tried searching on the Internetmouse or keyboard to view your search for yourself, you should already know all about the power of Google. There really is no search engine that matches the results you can get with Google. Most of you probably already know about a number of [Google's tools](#), like the Google Image Search and Froogle. Now there is another tool to add to your Google toolbox – the [Google Viewer](#).

The Google Viewer is the first tool of its kind on the Internet. It works by displaying the web pages in your search results as a scrolling slide show, accompanied by the same description you get with a normal Google

Search. You don't even need to use your mouse to view your search results. It is totally hands-free! You can even change the length of time that each page is displayed – anywhere from 8 seconds on up.

The only downfall to this new tool will apply to those of us who still have a dial-up connection. If you are one of those people, you will most certainly be playing the waiting game. You will need to set the delay to a much larger number - 20 seconds or longer - in order to see the contents of the web pages in the slide show. Otherwise, the Google Viewer is an excellent new addition to anybody's web toolbox.

Tools for Teachers:

"Over 4.5 million students and teachers are building skills and enhancing learning with ePALS. Established in 1996, ePALS has 81,199 classroom profiles bringing people in 191 countries together as cross-cultural learning partners and friends."



"Over 4.5 million students and teachers are building skills and enhancing learning with ePALS."

In this day of global interdependence there is an ever-increasing need for citizens to achieve global awareness and a worldly outlook. It makes perfect sense to teach our students these skills and expose them to the rest of the world while they are still young. There are few tools to help us in this task that match the results you can get with [ePALS](#).

According to their web site, ePALS is, "The world's largest online classroom community." There are member classrooms from countries as far away as Finland, France, India, and Peru (191 countries total), all bringing to the table their unique culture and customs, as well as a wealth of information about their wide variety of natural environments, resources, and individual interests. And the best part: this online global classroom community is 100% free!!! All you need to do is register your classroom, and you will be included in the ePALS member directory.

How do you register?

You will need to answer a few questions about your classroom (number of students, age/grade level, etc...), and then set up a member profile. Your member profile should be a brief statement about your classroom situation and what your students want to learn through ePALS. Once accepted as a member, this member profile allows other members to search for, and find, classrooms whose wants/needs match their own. For example, if you are a French teacher and want your students to connect with a classroom in France to learn more about their culture, all you need to do is search for a classroom in France whose needs are reciprocal to yours.

What do you do once you're a member?

The first thing you will want to do is set up e-mail accounts for each of your students. If they are under the age of 13 you will need to download and distribute the [ePALS privacy statement and permission slip](#) first. You are free to set up a maximum of 35 student e-mail accounts. The e-mail is teacher-monitored, filtered for content, and will allow your students, and yourself, to communicate with any of the ePALS member classrooms from around the globe. After you have e-mail accounts set up, you will want to go ahead and [search](#) for a classroom to communicate with.

What kind of projects can be completed through ePALS?

You are free to set up any type of project that you like. All you need to do is find a classroom interested in taking part. Your own creativity is the limit. The project could be as simple as e-mailing ePALS in another country, - a.k.a. pen pals – or as complex as learning about the correlation between the destruction of the rainforests and global warming, through e-mail, online discussion boards (with experts in the field), and collaboration with other classrooms. But for those of us who are not so inclined, there are also numerous projects already available to choose from on the [ePALS project page](#).

To learn more about ePALS, check out their "[About ePALS](#)" page, and explore the rest of their web site – it is quite extensive. When utilized to its full potential, ePALS yields tremendous results, allowing you to take your students wherever your imagination leads – the sky is the limit.

EDC Student Spotlight – Sue Ronan

Sue Ronan graduated in May with her graduate degree in education from Buffalo State College, but has been reaping the benefits of what she learned through the Educational Computing Program for quite some time. Sue teaches in a blended kindergarten class in [Alden](#) – it will be her 6th year in September. She is the special education teacher in the room and services a number of students with a variety of special needs.

When Sue began the EDC program all she knew how to do with computers was basic word processing. After completing her Master's she can now, "design and maintain web sites, create web based activities, develop and teach online courses (for money!), and teach colleagues how to do the same." It is amazing how far she has come in just a few short years.

Since technology is always changing, Sue constantly finds herself learning how to use new hardware and software in her classroom. These things are then streamlined into her curriculum, meaning that she is learning at the same time her students are learning. That sure makes for an exciting classroom experience. The EDC program has helped Sue with her many technological endeavors in the classroom, including learning that not all technology is suitable for all students.

Sue's relationships with her colleagues at [Alden Primary](#) have also been positively affected by her experience with the EDC program. More and more, she finds herself being asked to help her fellow teachers with technology related questions. It may be something as simple as performing first aid on a frozen computer, or it may be as involved as helping other teachers integrate technology in some way into their own classrooms. Sue has even been asked to help out with a few staff development days

thanks to her technological expertise. According to Sue, "It's wonderful to have a forum to share ideas with the faculty in my building."

Sue has integrated technology in many ways in her classroom, not least of which is the [class web site](#), which she designed and continues to maintain. She uses it daily with her students to track the phases of the moon and learn the parts of the computer, among many other things. She was even given the honor of being selected as an [Innovation Odyssey Classroom](#) by Intel for her great work with technology integration. For her class' end of the year celebration, Sue taught her kindergarteners how to scan baby photos into the computer, draw themselves in MS Paint, and find clipart of their future careers. All of these elements were then combined into a multimedia PowerPoint presentation...WOW! Plus, check out what Sue has done with [ePALS](#) in her kindergarten classroom.

The most memorable thing about the EDC program for Susan was learning from her peers. "I was always astounded," said Sue, "by the technology integration projects they developed." She found it very inspiring to hear and see the creative ideas of others, and it has obviously rubbed off on her.

On a personal note, Sue is 28 years old. She enjoys camping, hiking, exercise, and anything else to do with the outdoors. "Now that I am finished with my Master's," she declared, "I can actually do those things again."

We wish Sue the best of luck in everything she does. Her accomplishments should be an example to all of us.



"I use what I learned through the program in some fashion every single day – both professionally and personally."

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About The Newsletter...

This newsletter is a graduate study independent project. Your feedback will be instrumental in making it a better resource for everyone. Since this is a graduate project its current life expectancy is for the summer. If you are interested in continuing this newsletter as your own project, please contact me, Peter Fuchs, at fuchp@sloan.wnyric.org or Dr. John Thompson at thompsjt@bscmail.buffalo.state.edu for more information.

Staying Focused Over the Summer Break

The summer can be a time to sit back, relax, and do nothing but enjoy your much-deserved vacation. But that doesn't mean you should stop looking for new and better ways to integrate technology into your teaching practices. There are a host of conferences, workshops, and in-services offered throughout the summer to help you in your technology endeavors for the upcoming school year.

[NECC 2003: Visions & Reflections](#)

This Ed Tech conference is being held from June 29th – July 2nd in Seattle, WA. That may sound like a long way to travel for a conference, but just remember that it's presented by the [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#), one of the largest Ed Tech agencies in the country.

[Society for Applied Learning Technology Education Technology Conference](#)

In August of this year S.A.L.T. is presenting a conference entitled "Washington's Interactive Technologies Conference." It will take place in Arlington, VA, from August 6th – August 8th, and will be the "premier venue for the presentation of the cutting edge of the state-of-the-art."

Other Conferences:

- 1.) [CAIS Summer Technology Conference](#)
- 2.) [AECT Summer Institute 2003](#)
- 3.) [MacWorld CreativePro Conference](#)
- 4.) [List of Ed Tech Conferences](#)
- 5.) [PLATO Learning Education and Technology Conference](#)

Participants at these conferences are sure to come home with a whole bunch of shiny new tools in their technology toolboxes, but what about those of us who don't have the means to travel to such far away places? No need to worry because there are number of alternatives.

[ASCD's Professional Development Online](#)

offers a number of online courses for the professional educator. Some examples are "Planning for Technology" and "Teaching Better with Technology."

[EdTech Leaders Online](#) offers many online workshops for teachers of all grade levels and content areas. There is a lot here to sift through, so there is almost certainly something for you.

You may also want to check out [Tech Learning](#) for a list of other online professional development resources. And don't forget to check out our good old friend [Google](#).

Technology Around the Country

[Maine](#)

From Now On (FNO), The Educational Technology Journal, has announced that it will be conducting an independent assessment of the State's Laptop Program that gives each 7th and 8th grade student in the state his or her very own laptop computer. The main goal of the assessment is to discover the impact the program has on student learning and teacher practices over a three-year period. Read the full story [here](#).

[Nebraska](#)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha conducted a free, weeklong summer camp in which the regions high school girls were allowed to learn technology away from their male peers. The goal of this camp is to inspire young women to pursue careers in Information Technology and Engineering. Click [here](#) for more info.

[Oregon](#)

A father in Portland is suing to have the satellite television station "Channel One," whose signal is sent into middle and high school classrooms across the country, banned from his child's school district. His complaint is that the advertising aired along with the content on Channel One, including soft drink and movie ads, totals up to five days of time that could be better spent on instruction. Click [here](#) for the full story.

[Michigan](#)

The Detroit Public Schools have spent \$75 million to outsource the district's Information Technology Department to a local computer company, and their investment has paid off in the amount of \$3 million a year in IT related savings. Read more [here](#).