NEWSLETTER

From the President's Laptop

Hi! All, What's happening?

Good question, let's start with Federal Government Policy on Education.

I have written a letter to Julia Gillard as Education Minister but still waiting for a response.

From the ACCE, contact has been made to Kevin Rudd but the President of the ACCE is still waiting for a response. I will keep you posted when I hear anything.

The AGM will be held on the 5th April 2008 at Newcastle Panthers starting from 10:30 am. All are welcome.

Conference 2008 is in process and still waiting for your presentations. These can be emailed to me asap to my email address, cuddlycj@optusnet.com.au. The timetable for the conference is in draft on the website. Check it out when you get a chance.

Hope to see you all at Newcastle on 6th and 7th July 2008.

Feed I.T.
Seed I.T.
Lead I.T.
I.C.T. in Education
NSWCEG 2008

NSWCEG 24th Annual Stare Conference

This years state conference will be held at Panthers, Newcastle on Sunday 6th July to Monday 7th July 2008

1. Mark your diary now!
2. Fill out your "Call for participation". Fax it to the office now!

Two of our keynotes for the Conference 2008

Susan Books-Young

Susan Brooks-Young has been involved in the field of instructional technology since 1979. She was one of the original technology users in the district where she taught and has continued to explore ways in which technology can be used to facilitate student learning. She has worked as computer mentor, technology trainer, and technology curriculum specialist.

Prior to establishing her own consulting firm, Susan was a teacher, site administrator, and technology specialist in a county office of education in a career that spanned more than 23 years. Since 1986, she has published articles and software reviews in a variety of education journals. She is also author of seven books which focus on how school leaders can implement the NETS*A Standards.

Susan works with educators nationally, focusing on practical technology-based strategies for personal productivity and effective technology implementation in schools.

More D-Link courses.

Details in this mailing

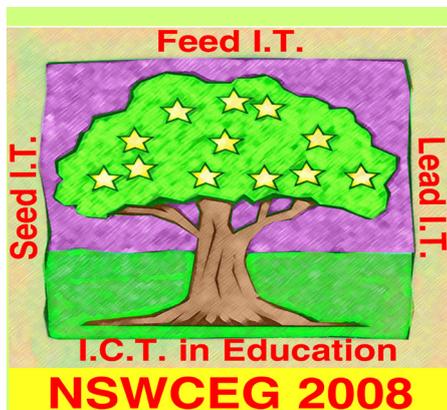### D-Link wireless certified

Roger Pryor

Roger has been involved with the NSWCEG over a number of years including as presenter and dinner entertainment at one of our conference at CSU Bathurst.

Roger Pryor is currently a School Education Director (SED) with the NSW Department of Education and Training, based in Newcastle within the Hunter Central Coast Region.

Within this role Roger has oversight of 33 schools and a range of regional portfolio responsibilities including the integration of ICT within quality teaching.

Prior to this, Roger was a primary school Principal for 16 years and has also worked within the Leadership Development Unit and as the Website Manager, and later President, of the NSW Primary Principals' Association.

The state conference will include:

* International keynote speakers
* Australian keynote speakers
* Workshops
* Presentations
* Expert panels
* Hands-on activities
* Vendor presentations and,
* an extensive exhibition.

Come and network with your peers.

Watch the List and the Website for further information.

Textonyms give cell phone addicts a new language

By Kate Kelland

LONDON (Reuters) - R U cycle? Book! Fancy an adds down the sub? There's a gr8 new carnage.

It may look like gobbledegook, but the most streetwise of teenagers would have no trouble translating and responding to it in kind.

A new language is being developed by cell phone-addicted kids based on the predictive text of their treasured handsets.

Key words are replaced by the first alternative that comes up on a mobile phone using predictive text -- changing "cool" into "book," "awake" into "cycle," "beer" into adds," "pub" into "sub" and "barmaid" into "carnage."

Those expressing excitement with the old-fashioned text phrase "woohoo!," now use the far more hip "zonino!" instead.

The replacement words -- technically paragrams, but commonly known as textonyms, adaptonyms or cellodromes -- are becoming part of regular teen banter.

And the older generation -- many of whom already struggle with simple text language -- are being thrown into yet deeper confusion.

According to David Crystal, a language expert at Bangor University in Wales, the new language is the latest in a long history of kids' linguistic creations.

"Everybody plays with language," he told Reuters. "Playing with language isn't new. It's absolutely normal for kids to experiment like this.

"And it's important to remind adults that they did

Mini-laptop sweeps through schools

Polly Curtis, education editor Monday February 11, 2008 The Guardian

It weighs less than a bottle of Coke, is smaller than an A5 pad and is so cheap the odd one left on a bus wouldn't break the bank. A lightweight laptop, hailed by self-confessed techno-geek Stephen Fry as the future of computing, has found an unexpected market: schools.

The computers, inspired by attempts to design a cheap laptop for the developing world, are being plugged into school networks, then given to pupils to take home in their satchels to do their homework. Ministers have backed a pilot scheme in which the laptops are sold to year groups in eight schools; 1,600 pupils are taking part, with parents contributing to the cost of the computers, and discounts for children who receive free school meals.

RM, the company supplying the Minibook computer to schools, sold out its first order of 6,000 within weeks, and is now projecting school sales of 30,000 by the end of the year. They are attracting the attention of IT teachers, and with them a multimillion-pound market in school computing so far dominated by Microsoft, the Goliath to RM's David.

"The kids like them just because they are small. There's a cute factor," said Noel Potter, IT technician at St Mary's primary school in Grangetown, Middlesbrough. The school brought in 25 Minibooks when its ICT suite was lost to a fire last autumn, and has decided to stick with them. "They are small and portable, but robust. They feel solid and not like a toy. They are certainly a laptop. We thought about getting them Palm Pilots but they are too different and wouldn't help the kids learn to use other PCs. They've even got some games - but educational games, basic maths and literacy." Hardware is VAT-free to schools, which get each Minibook at the knockdown price of £169. Some are signing multi-purchase deals, paying them off at £1.60 a week per laptop. Secondary schools typically spend £90,000 a year on ICT.

For the price of a computer suite, whole year groups could be given their own laptop. They can handle internet, simple word files and email but their memory is too small at 4GB for children to load them up with computer games. Crucially, they slip inside a schoolbag and are less likely to make a child the target of muggers on the way home from school. The government is separately seeking deals with companies to make internet access available in every child's home and has met Microsoft, BT, Sky, Virgin and RM to discuss proposals. A home internet access taskforce is due to report this spring.

Last year the government spent £801m on IT equipment for schools. Microsoft has the lion's share of the market, but the Minibooks circumvent this iron grip by using Linux open source software instead of Microsoft Windows Vista.

However, the David and Goliath battle with Microsoft will end in a few months' time when RM produces a new Minibook with its software.

"The product is an exciting new format. It's clearly ultra-portable, low-cost and it will soon be available in Microsoft software," said Steve Beswick, head of education at Microsoft. "There's significant demand out there. They want the device but with Windows on it."

Ten Tips for Digital Movie-Making

One of the most innovative and exciting instructional strategies is to have students create their own movies.

Digital technologies are revolutionizing education at every grade level and in every subject area. The possibilities are endless, and students' movies are particularly motivating.

There are essentially three stages in the creation of student-developed movies: pre-production, production and post-production. Each stage has several components and fa cets. This article offers you suggestions for the post-production stage.

1. The Importance of Deadlines:

Post-production work requires ample time; therefore, it's essential to establish and stick to strict timelines for all project activities. Without this, post-production typically becomes short-changed and the victim of missed deadlines.

Because this is a learning experience for students, it's critical for students to complete the entire process. Therefore, keep students on-time, on-task and moving forward.

2. Use Student Reflections for Assessment Purposes:

Begin the post-production stage by asking your students to reflect on the earlier (pre-production and production) stages of their digital media project. This activity enables you to elicit comments from students while the experience is still fresh.

Here are some sample questions to spur reflection:

* What were the most challenging aspects of the pre-production and production stages?

* What would you do differently next time?

* What topics do you need to know more about?

* What specific suggestions would you offer someone starting his first media project?

Use this assessment information to gauge students' understandings as well as to plan for future classes.

3. Purposeful Post-Production

Post-production includes a number of possible activities, including editing the picture and soundtrack as well as adding sound effects, music and special effects. The complexity of the final product will be determined by the age of the students, available resources and expertise.
All post-production decisions should be based on logical reasoning. Ask students for the rationale of their decisions. Resist responses such as "I just like it" or "it looks awesome." Instead, insist on answers related to purposeful objectives. "I strung 30, 12 second shots together to reflect the fast-paced action of the scene." "I choose lyrical orchestral music because I was trying to reinforce the peaceful setting of the video." Responses from younger children may not be as sophisticated, but they still should be purposeful.

4. Realistic Expectations

Set clear expectations for post-production activities and communicate them to your students. While it might be reasonable to require high school students to add animation and sound effects, expectations for middle school students may focus on organizing the video (telling the story) in a coherent way. Be sure to allow for some flexibility because of the range of abilities in your class. One student will need direction on locating the on/off switch while another may be the next Stephen Spielberg.

5. Post-Production Basics

Post-production is part technical expertise, part art. Explaining and demonstrating common post-production activities will depend on your personal skills. Thanks to the Internet, there are multiple resources to assist you. Entering "post-production tips for teachers" into a reliable search engine will yield an array of useful resources. Novices as well as experts will benefit.

6. The Rough Cut

The rough cut is the student's first attempt at creating a final product after learning some post-production techniques. The storyboard (hopefully created in pre-production) serves as a valuable blueprint.
Verifying the quality of raw video footage and sound as well as initially sequencing scenes in the preferred order is an important first step. They can also attempt other general refinements, time permitting. Remember, this is a rough cut.

7. The Rough Cut Critique

This informal screening includes you and your students. It's an opportunity to view rough cuts and to make constructive suggestions. This process stimulates self-reflection and builds camaraderie among classmates.

8. The Final Cut

Incorporating useful suggestions from the rough cut critique, students create their final cut. This cut publicly exhibits their assimilation of all aspects of the digital media project.

9. Screening and Celebration

Screen final cuts together. Emphasize the positive. Be sure to go beyond reviews of "I liked it!" Encourage your students to comment on pacing, camera angles, music, etc. What made a particular sequence exceptional?

It's also an appropriate forum to celebrate your accomplishments, reflect on what was learned and plan future digital journeys.

10. General Reminder - Telling Versus Guiding Students

Your primary purpose in this digital media project is to guide students instead of telling them exactly what to do. While there are some technical "how" questions that require a direct response, such as "How do I add sound effects to my digital video?", many questions should be given back to students. "We need a racing car engine sound for our video, where can we find one?" While it might be easier and faster to give these students several Internet web sites to check, their learning is enhanced by turning the question back to them. "Where would you look?" Further guidance may be needed depending on their response. Learning how to find their own information will serve them well now and throughout their lives.

By Janet Buckenmeyer

From TechLeanring.com's Educators' eZine
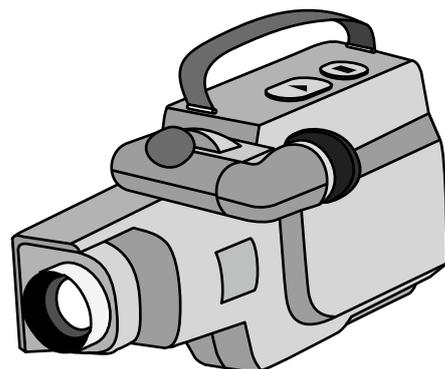
A third of teachers 'struggle with technology'

Anthea Lipsett
Monday January 28, 2008
EducationGuardian.co.uk

A third of teachers struggle to use the technology schools are equipped with and want more support and training, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) said today.

NFER's first Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey (TVOS), which was completed by about 1,000 teachers, including heads and newly qualified classroom teachers, shows widespread use of information technology in schools: 80% said it had made a difference to the way they teach.

But a "sizeable minority" (33%) felt they lacked the necessary skills to exploit the technology available to them and needed more support and information to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons, NFER found.

A third of the teachers surveyed said lack of resources and poor reliability discouraged them and limited their use of ICT in schools.

But NFER said when compared to research conducted in 2004, the findings suggest that teacher competence in using ICT has improved overall.

Two thirds (67%) said they had the ICT skills to exploit the technology available to them and 62% said ICT helps to raise pupil attainment.

Teachers also said ICT leadership in schools could be improved. Just 27% of respondents felt that the leadership of ICT pedagogy in their school was inspirational and only 44% said that their school is innovative in its use of ICT.

NFER's Maria Charles said: "The first TVOS survey has given us a valuable insight into the views of teachers. We hope to be able to continue addressing current issues within teaching in further surveys."

Nine Needs for Web Literacy

Teachers and students need new literacy skills as more and more of the resources they turn to are web-based. Here are tips on what to help them learn.

On the Web, much of what students read is not always fact - or at least not verified as completely accurate, and articles and blogs are often laced with opinion. So it is extremely important that students know how to evaluate information that they read. It is also important that teachers know how to help them.

Reading URLs for information
A great deal of information can be gleaned from the URL of a website. It is possible to tell whether the site is commercial, government or educational. Students should know that a "tilde," the ~ symbol, could mean that this is a personal site on an official server. They should also be very wary if the word 'blog' appears anywhere, as this is a dead giveaway that the opinions and/or information is subjective.

Looking for information about the Author
The URL is not enough information. It is possible for a site to have a .edu ending and still be an inaccurate site created by an individual. Whenever a site is going to be used for documentation it is important to know WHO actually created the site. It is possible to do a search and maybe find out more about the author. Students need to develop a sense that just about anyone can create a web page (including themselves). Did another student write this page? Were they careful about their facts?

The "About" section of a Web site
Most web sites today have an "about us" section. This can be extremely helpful in giving the reader an idea about the goals of the web site.

Careful Reading of Websites
Many websites are made to look like other sites on purpose in order to spoof the reader. One in particular is the spoof "World Trade Organization" site that was created as a criticism of the World Trade Organization. Compare it to the real World Trade Organization site. Read carefully and it is clear that the former

is not the WTO site. But many adults and children are NOT carefully reading; instead they skim, find what they think are looking for, and move on.

Careful Reading of Email
Careful reading helps to spot SPAM or more dangerous "Phishing" messages. Look for misspellings or missing information. A common one now claims that your eBay account needs attention, but whenever eBay sends you an Email message it will have your user name on it. These messages always call you "eBay user" instead of by your actual name.

Recognizing Advertisements
Those ads have really gotten clever recently. The animated cartoons draw your eye and often it seems like the right place to click. Children and teens are more likely than adults to be fooled by advertisements on Web pages.

Looking for Dates
Students need to ask themselves if the information that they are getting is outdated. Web pages are often put up and forgotten. Most pages include some type of date on the page. This can show you when the page was last updated. If there is no date, which is often the case, then it is time for triangulation.

Triangulation
Students should know how to triangulate, which is a fancy way for saying finding three sources that agree on a fact. It is still possible to be wrong if you find three unreliable sources, but less likely. But be careful;; the three sources should not come from links. Often a Web page will have links to other sites that agree with it. Using these links is not triangulation. It is best when there are three completely different sources which all agree.

Being Skeptical
The main thing is that students (and teachers) need to nourish a healthy skepticism. This does not mean being negative about everything, but is a way of digging deeper and being really sure about something before passing it on.

By Janice Friesen
Adapted from TechLearning.com