**Visit teachopolis.org: A Virtual City for Teachers**

Cari Cannon

Teachopolis.org was conceived as a free, nonprofit learning community for educators who want to learn how to use technology in teaching and learning. The site uses the navigational metaphor of a virtual "city", replete with specialized buildings such as a Games Arcade, a Distance Education University (housing summaries of seminal studies in distance ed), the Halls of Justice (information on combating cheating and plagiarism), a Library, and many others.

The site, located at www.teachopolis.org, also features a variety of free tools designed to facilitate tasks faculty face in their teaching. Together, these tools comprise the first “Performance Support System” for teachers, providing educators with assistance for creating student learning outcomes, syllabi, conduct statements, and formative evaluations.

Teachopolis.org also houses “Peril”, an Internet-based game that lets educators type in questions which are converted into a fun quiz show game for classroom presentation.

According to the site’s creator, Dr. Robert Bramucci, “whenever I taught faculty development workshops, faculty requested copies of resources I’d created. Therefore, inspired by the Open Source software movement, I decided to create a web site to offer these resources for free.”

The idea proved popular. Teachopolis.org receives over 100,000 “hits” per year from visitors all over the world.

**Web Accessibility 101**

Scott James

Web accessibility enables people with disabilities to use the Web. More specifically, Web accessibility allows people with disabilities to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and to contribute to the Web. Web accessibility also benefits others, including older people with changing abilities due to aging.

Web accessibility accommodates all disabilities that affect access to the Web, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities.

Millions of people have disabilities that affect their use of the Web. Currently most Web sites and Web software have accessibility barriers that make it difficult or impossible for many people with disabilities to use the Web. As more accessible (continued)
Blogs
Alice Ho
What is a blog? Blog, a short form of weblog, is an online personal journal. It can also be defined as an interactive website that allows the owners to easily publish ideas and information. Readers can read and add comments, creating a conversation across the continents. Some blogs just have text; while others display pictures, videos, audio or other files such as Power Point presentation.
Blogs have been around for years, but only recently have they emerged as popular and powerful communication tools. Technorati, a blogging search engine, estimated that there are about 16.5 million blogs with thousands more being created every day!
Some popular examples of blogs are:
• http://www.huffingtonpost.com
• http://www.instapundit.com
• http://www.dailykos.com
Some college and university blog examples are:
• UCI Libraries (http://www.lib.uci.edu)
• Randolph Community College (http://alumni.randolph.edu/general/announce.asp),
• Santa Clara University (http://www.scu.edu/blogSCU).
To search through blogs on the Internet, try the following search engine: Google Blog Search (http://www.google.com/)

Computers for Physics? In Pursuit of a Grant
Curt Childress
Our new full time Physics instructor Craig Rutan is working on submitting request for proposal for the 2006 HP Technology for Teaching Grant RFP due February 15, 2006. HP will announce the award nominees no later than May 1, 2006.
This grant is valued at more than $70,000 of hardware consisting of the following items:

1 Faculty wireless HP Tablet PC with docking station
1 portable HP digital projector
20 Student wireless HP Tablet PC’s with external Drive Bays and DVD/CDRW drives
1 HP Access Point
1 HP 20 unit Laptop cart
1 HP all-in-one inkjet printer and digital camera
Plus other exciting items
Continued on page 4...

Merlot
Odette Borrey
The site “Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching” or MERLOT is not a French wine! Rather it is a website with free and open resources designed primarily for faculty teaching in higher education institutions.
The MERLOT Project is a collaboration among 22 higher education institutions and systems, including California’s community colleges. Its purpose is to develop a free, web-based resource where faculty can easily find digital learning materials organized by academic field, together with evaluations and guidance for their use.
Every single topic posted is reviewed and rated through a peer evaluation system. The collection includes Arts, Business, Education, Humanities, Mathematics and Statistics, Sciences and Technology, and Social Sciences.
Membership is FREE. Members can just navigate the site for new material to improve their lessons or contribute to the collection by adding material, assignments and comments.
MERLOT is truly an inspiring and useful site to find and exchange ideas.
Get TechEDge Newsletter For Free!

Want to keep abreast of technology news relevant to the California Community College System? If so check out CCC TechEDge which is published quarterly with two additional, special issues per year.

It is distributed to distance educators, information systems officers, business leaders, the California legislature, and other interested parties.

Funded by a grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s office and published by the California Community Colleges Technology Center, its purpose is to provide timely and relevant news about telecommunications and technology in California’s 109 community colleges.

TechEDge publishes news and information about technology grants, awards, and happenings throughout the state.

TechEDge welcomes relevant submissions and feedback. You can request to join their mailing list.

Direct all correspondence to the TechEDge Editor at: editor@ccctechedge.com.

TechEDge can also be accessed online at:

http://ccctechedge.com/

Upcoming Technology Conferences

Connie Wilson

There are some California educational technology conferences / institutes scheduled this spring that might be of interest to SCC educators.

TechEd 2006

TechEd Events is a program sponsored by the non-profit Community College Foundation; they are dedicated to educational excellence through effective uses of the latest technology solutions. Annual events focus on partnering educators and the technology industry to learn from one another about innovative technology, teaching practices, and emerging trends that are impacting and enhancing how students learn.

The 11th annual TechEd International Conference and Exposition is entitled “Sharing the Vision” this year, and it will be held March 27 – 29, 2006, at the Pasadena Conference Center in Pasedena. Pre-conference ses-

First Technology Day A Success

Cari Cannon

Over 100 people, 10 colleges, and a half-dozen vendors participated in the first annual Technology Day at Santiago Canyon College.

Dr. Robert Bramucci opened the day with an inspiring keynote: Straight Talk About Distance Education.

The day included 1-, 2-, and 3-hour workshops focused on using technology to improve teaching and enhance student learning.

Every participant received a bag and a T-shirt donated by Microsoft and lunch was provided for all by the SCC Academic Senate and the VP of Instruction’s office.

At the end of the day, participants filled out an exit survey. The survey showed that every single participant felt that the day either met or exceeded their expectations.

Prizes including software, DJ ditty’s, and gift certificates were raffled.

All presenters received a small...
The Technology Committee promotes the use of technology to increase efficiency of college operations and to support teaching and enhance learning.

Physics Grant (Continued From Page 2)

The physics department has two goals that this equipment will help us to achieve. The first goal is to expand our microcomputer based laboratory so that instead of having lab groups of up to six people, the size of a lab group can be reduced to two or three students.

The second goal is based on recent research in physics education that shows usually students don’t absorb lecture material unless they are an active participant. One way to actively involve the students in the lecture environment is with Physlets.

A Physlet is a java based software demonstration where the student will be able to set the parameters of the experiment (instead of the instructor). The other way that this equipment can be used to increase classroom participation is with Classroom Presenter, a free software package developed at the University of Washington. With this software, the instructor and the student can both add notes to previously prepared files. This means that the instructor can write up an example solution without having to turn their back on the students. Additionally, when using a wireless router, any changes to the notes will appear directly on the student’s screen.

The best part of the software is that the instructor can have the student write a solution to an in class problem and then project that solution anonymously. Now you can project correct and incorrect solutions without students having to come up in front of the class. It is my belief that this technology will allow us to create an extremely effective physics program.
Web Accessibility 101 Continued from Page 1

Web sites and software become available, people with disabilities are able to use and contribute to the Web more effectively.

Web accessibility also **benefits** people without disabilities. For example, a key principle of Web accessibility is designing Web sites and software that are flexible to meet different user needs, preferences, and situations. This **flexibility** also benefits people without disabilities in certain situations, such as people using a slow Internet connection, people with "temporary disabilities" such as a broken arm, and people with changing abilities due to aging.

**Why Web Accessibility is Important**

It is essential that the Web be accessible in order to provide **equal access** and **equal opportunity** to people with disabilities. An accessible Web can also help people with disabilities more actively participate in the educational process.

The Web offers the possibility of **unprecedented access to information and interaction** for many people with disabilities. That is, the accessibility barriers to print, audio, and visual media can be much more easily overcome through Web technologies.

Another important consideration for SCC is that Web accessibility is required by law to provide equal access and equal opportunity to all the programs, services and activities offered by the college.

**Making the Web Accessible**

Much of the focus on Web accessibility has been on the responsibilities of Web developers. However, Web software also has a vital role in Web accessibility. Software needs to help developers produce and evaluate accessible Web sites, and be usable by people with disabilities.

**Making Your Web Site Accessible**

Making a Web site accessible can be simple or complex, depending on many factors such as the type of content, the size and complexity of the site, and the development tools and environment.

Many accessibility features are easily implemented if they are planned from the beginning of Web site development or redesign. Fixing inaccessible Web sites can require significant effort, especially sites that were not originally "coded" properly with standard XHTML markup, and sites with certain types of content such as multimedia.

**Evaluating the Accessibility of a Web Site**

When developing or redesigning a site, evaluating accessibility early and throughout the development process can identify accessibility problems early when it is easier to address them. Simple techniques such as changing settings in a browser can determine if a Web page meets some accessibility guidelines. A comprehensive evaluation to determine if a site meets all accessibility guidelines is much more complex.

There are evaluation tools that help with evaluation. However, no tool alone can determine if a site meets accessibility guidelines. Knowledgeable **human evaluation is required** to determine if a site is accessible.

**For More Information**

The Disabled Student Center is here to help faculty and staff make their websites accessible. Please contact Scott James, Alternate Media Specialist, by phone at 628-4864, by email at james_scott@sccollege.edu, or stop by room E-105 to discuss your needs.

Article by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), visit the W3C at www.W3.org.
Upcoming Technology Conferences Continued from Page 3

This year’s keynote speakers include David Cavallo, famed MIT Research Scientist and Dr. Jennifer James, Urban Cultural Anthropologist. Besides hearing the keynote speakers, participants will have access to hundreds of hands-on workshops, a variety of special sessions, and an interactive exhibit floor featuring leading technology companies. This year’s focus will be on eLearning, funding strategies, learning anywhere, administrative computing, web design and development, workforce development, the softer side of technology, digital media, and technology for standards-based assessment and learning.

Cost: Pricing structure varies. Visit: www.techedevents.org

California Special Populations Conference

The California Special Populations Conference focuses on helping the development of academic, vocational and technical skills of secondary and post secondary special population students who choose to enroll in vocational and technical education programs. Special populations addressed include: non-traditional learners, limited English proficient learners, learners with economic disadvantage, learners with disabilities, learners who are single parents or displaced homemakers.

This conference will be held February 22 – 23, 2006, at the Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza Hotel in Sacramento and is sponsored by the California Department of Education and the California Community College Chancellor’s Office through the Carl D. Perkins VETEA grants 05-342-002 and 05-342-005.

Cost: Visit: www.casp.cc

@ONE 2006 Spring Technical Institute – Improving Education Through Technology

@ONE Hands-On Institutes offer California Community College staff and faculty affordable, high-quality workshops on how to use technology more effectively to achieve student success.

This year’s 2006 Spring Technical Institute will be held April 10 – 14, 2006, at East Los Angeles College.

Cost: The Hands-on Institutes, including meals, costs just $50. One academic credit is available for an additional $50 through Fresno Pacific University if you complete a small demonstration project after the Institute. Visit: www.cccone.org

Other Conferences

CENIC Annual Conference March 13-15 2006 Oakland CA cenic.org

9th Annual Innovations March 19-22 2006 Atlanta, Georgia wwwleague.org

Secure IT Conference 2006 March 21-24 Anaheim CA wwwsecureitconf.com

ADEC Summit XVII March 22-25 2006 Pasadena CA wwwadec-cal.org

Educause & Internet2 Security April 11-12 2006 Denver CO www.educause.edu