SCC is Turning It In!

Corinna L. Evett

What is Turnitin.com? Well, for those who still may not know, it is an online plagiarism prevention tool used by students and faculty alike at all levels of education from secondary schools to universities. As stated on Turnitin’s website, “Turnitin helps educators and students take full advantage of the internet’s educational potential.” Thanks to the members of SCC’s Technology Committee, SCC has the opportunity to benefit from this tool. With a license for spring and fall 2008, SCC’s English Department is conducting a pilot run of Turnitin. Even though we’re only a few months into the spring semester, Turnitin’s outlook seems promising.

Thus far, the feedback from the faculty has been overwhelmingly positive. Some were skeptical that using Turnitin would be time consuming and difficult, but many have happily reported that the site is surprisingly “user friendly.” One professor says, “It was easy for a semi-non-techie like me!” In addition to the ease of usability, many of the professors have seen the benefits of the site. Some have begun to use different features of Turnitin beyond simply checking for plagiarism. One professor has already used the discussion board component, which has enabled her class to ask and answer questions in regards to the course. After exploring different features of Turnitin, another professor says, “I can now see the value and ease behind the Turnitin model.” Finally, the plagiarism video tutorials and print information have also been utilized in various classes as a learning tool, and one professor plans on linking an assignment to the tutorials in order to reinforce the ways in which one can avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism. From these testimonials, one can see that Turnitin does more than simply identify plagiarism.

The faculty aren’t the only people with positive attitudes toward Turnitin. Many students, including those in my classes, have mentioned that they look forward to using Turnitin because it allows them to view their own originality reports (the evaluation of information that may or may not have been plagiarized) before submitting their final work. Therefore, they have the opportunity to utilize Turnitin as a tool to check their own work and identify instances of accidental plagiarism so that they may make any necessary changes before the final submission deadline. Moreover, students, like the professors, have reported that they were impressed with the ease of the sign up and upload processes. Furthermore, many students have already utilized Turnitin through other institutions, so this is a seamless transition for them.

Even though the response for Turnitin has been mainly positive,
Sympodium & SynchronEyes!

Leah Freidenrich

Sympodium and SynchronEyes? It sounds like a symphony, making you, the instructor, the conductor!

Sympodium products enable you to effortlessly control any presentation and bring it to life – all you have to do is connect your interactive pen display to a computer and projector. Write over slides or web pages in digital ink, save your notes, access any website or multimedia file and project your work onto a large screen to give your audience a truly interactive experience.

The corresponding software, SynchonEyes, allows the instructor to control student computers, keeping the class on task and together. The instructor can broadcast his monitor to all the student computers or let students “broadcast” their work/search for the rest of the class. This allows the instructor to highlight searches in progress; and it makes the students take responsibility for their learning and empowers them as leaders within the class.

Powered by the very same award-winning software as the SMART Board interactive whiteboards, Sympodium with its interactive pens and Synchronize with its ability to manage the direction of the class are dynamic presentation tools taking a lecture from instructor driven to student led. Students love this tool because it adds color, spontaneity and interactivity to any lecture. Prices for Sympodium/SynchronEyes start at around $2,600.

Sympodium/SynchronEyes is really easy to learn and available for you to try before you invest. The Librarians use it for all their classes, turning the interactive pen over to students to conduct searches and highlight information for the class. Call Alice Ho in the Library x5015 and give Sympodium/SynchronEyes a try.

Turning It In . . .

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there are a few concerns that have been mentioned. One such concern is that students are not uploading their work in a timely manner, and some students are not uploading their work at all. Since Turnitin is a new procedure here at SCC, there will be a learning curve for students just as there is a learning curve for the faculty. It will take time for all involved to get acclimated to the Turnitin process. A suggestion from one faculty member was that a grace period of at least 24 to 48 hours would be beneficial so that those students who forget to upload work might remember, and those who encounter technical difficulties can find other avenues for upload. Because the problem of not submitting work lies with students and their study habits, it seems that the positives of Turnitin still outweigh the negatives.

To make a positive report even more positive, there have been no known instances of plagiarism thus far. Although it’s too soon to attribute that success solely to Turnitin, one can concede that, at the very least, Turnitin is proving to be a beneficial educational tool. As the use of Turnitin increases among students and faculty, we can look forward to even more success as SCC continues to turn it in!

Flex Technology Series

Joe Yorba

Have you ever thought you might like to utilize more technology in the classroom? Do you want to increase students’ access to your curriculum, but you haven’t been able to find the time for training? Is your website in need of updating, but you don’t know how? This semester your Technology Committee provided a series of workshops during FLEX week that provided hands on training for these and several other technology related skills.

Scott James presented a workshop on adding voice-over to PowerPoint
presentations and another on recording and posting a podcast. Each of these techniques provides a means for uploading lecture components to a website (e.g., Blackboard) for future access by students.

Cindy Swift and Corinna Evett provided a beginning and advanced PowerPoint workshop, as well as a presentation on how to enhance usability with BlackBoard; here topics included posting quizzes and promoting collaboration with the discussion board.

Don Busche had two sessions focused on maintaining and enhancing your webpage. Don demonstrated the SCC web editor, and gave personal one-on-one assistance to participants.

Bonnie Slager provided comprehensive interactive Blackboard training. Her sessions were offered to first-time users, as well as those who are interested in teaching an on-line class. This is training that Bonnie provides each FLEX week, and this semester tests and test banks were an area of focus.

Darlene Ornelas gave a first-time presentation on the interactive SmartBoard. This is a relatively new technology here at SCC, and it is one where we hope to broaden access. The ELMO document camera and Tablet PC were also demonstrated at this workshop. Each of these presentation systems allows the lecturer to capture the visual portions of the lecture and then upload them to the web for students to access again at a later time.

Each of the above presenters was eager to share knowledge and ideas with attendees. “I feel like I am at play when I am learning new technology tools; and, as it turns out, I was joined by a great group of fellow experimenters,” was a comment from Scott James regarding his experience. The Technology Committee would like to continue the tradition of the Tech Series, and faculty input is desired as we consider broadening the topics. Please discuss your needs/desires with your faculty representative, and feel free to contact our presenters if you would like further details regarding their sessions. There is a wealth of resources and training opportunities right here at SCC; we just need access.

Orange County Multimedia Association
Scot Trodick

The non-profit Orange County MultiMedia Association (OCMMA) has helped shape the emerging multimedia industry in Orange County since 1987. It is dedicated to promoting multimedia arts and technologies, while educating the local business community and multimedia professionals about the profound impact multimedia is having in our world today.

OCMMA offers a rich line-up of monthly meetings where educational presentations are delivered to keep members current with emerging developments in multimedia and related technologies. The meetings also promote peer networking and support. The aim is to inspire creativity, efficiency, and effectiveness in all facets of the multimedia profession. With many high-tech industries already located in Southern California, Orange County is becoming one of the leading centers worldwide for cutting edge multimedia development and technologies.

Over the years, OCMMA has played an important role in advising Southern California colleges and even high schools in matters related to multimedia curricula. OCMMA members are still on the advisory boards of colleges for this purpose.

The Board of Directors of the Orange County MultiMedia Association are bringing the association into the Web 2.0 age. Visit the OCMMA blog at http://www.ocmma.org/blog; also, feel free to check out additional functionality within the official www.ocmma.org website.
Students Facilitating the Development of Industry Leaders

William Jimenez and Justin Silva

Students have an amazing power to innovate. Maybe it is the "all-nighters" and abundance of coffee, or the time spent looking for sources of entertainment; but whatever the case, students have created some of the most influential projects of our time. The first web directory was started at Stanford University, which would later become Yahoo! Michael Dell started his famous computer company out of the University of Texas dorms. Sun Microsystems has its roots in Stanford University, as well. The common denominator in these success stories is that many of the key players in today's technology industry developed their ideas while in their college years.

Why is the academic environment so conducive to breakthrough technical advances? Why is the world being turned upside down by college students? The answer lies in how colleges and universities facilitate learning.

Over the past several years, the computer industry has seen exponential growth – so much so, computers have really permeated a large amount of our everyday lives. Computers run our cars, our dishwashers, and even our clocks. Microprocessors are used in so many things we use in our daily lives; it is a wonder there could have been a civilized existence without them. While computer technology, in a broad sense, is advancing rapidly, its progress is most evident in personal computer applications. The personal computer revolutionized the way we operate as a society and created a multi-billion dollar industry.

Along with the rapid transformation are experienced professionals who are qualified to meet the intense needs of working with computer systems. The competitive nature of the industry requires that professionals seeking to make an impact possess not only a great familiarity and knowledge of key computer technologies but the ability to stay current with cutting edge developments in the field. More importantly, professionals need experience. Experience is one of the greatest assets for a student looking to have a role in an enterprise class computer system. For a company running a mission critical system that cannot afford any down time, a student with experience is a vital asset.

Higher education gives students extensive knowledge of computer science, but without an environment to gain experience, they cannot succeed in the industry. Simulations and textbook scenarios cannot compare to the skills gained from working with a team of talented people running an enterprise class system. It is when students can have a “hands on” experience with what they have learned in the classroom that the hard work of computer science teachers has paid off. For this reason, the Santiago Canyon College Computer Technology Club works with the Computer Science Department at SCC to further what professors are teaching their students.

The SCC Computer Technology Club soon will be providing an environment in which students will gain practical skills as well as be able to explore and develop technologies to change our world.

Along with the benefits to our students, the SCC Computer Technology Club offers benefits for the entire college. As of today, most community colleges do not have the ability or the manpower to run a successful technology club; therefore, SCC will be proudly paving the road for other colleges to follow. Furthermore, this technology program will put Santiago Canyon College on the map next to well known colleges such as UC Berkeley.

The club is run by President William Jimenez and Vice President Justin Silva; both are current Santiago Canyon College students and will be passing the torch along to underclassmen for the years to come. Ultimately, the SCC Computer Technology Club is providing our school a resource efficient and cost effective opportunity to advance in the technology industry and to give the students of today the ability to change the future of tomorrow.

"I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious." Albert Einstein