

# Online Chronicle of Distance Education & Communication

Volume #2, Issue #1

Date: October 1988

Editor:

Jason Ohler, Director  
Educational Technology Program  
University of Alaska Southeast

## ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

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In the industrial age, we go to school. In the information age, school can come to us. This is the message implicit in the media and movement of distance education.

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## WELCOME TO THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

### FROM THE EDITOR:

Welcome back to another season of the Online Journal. **WE ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTIONS.** Please keep them brief, a few screens maximum. I look forward to hearing from you.

The advantage of the electronic journal is that you, the reader, can contact the authors directly via BITNET. Please feel free to do so.

**NEW ADDRESS:** Normally I am at the address above. But during the 88-89 school year I am in Vancouver,

BC. at:

1190 W 12th, #9  
Vancouver, BC Canada V6H 1L6  
Phone: 604-732-9452.

However, I will still use my BITNET address JFJBO@ALASKA

This issue at a glance:

1. [THE TRAVELLING PC Bus](#)-Educators in Lapland Bring Computers to Remote Areas  
by Mika Petasnorro and Eero Pekkarinen

BITNET ID:EPEKKARINEN@FINOUC

2. [THE ELECTRONIC FIELD TRIP](#)-Online Archaeology  
by Henk Sligte (BITNET ID: A717SLIG@HASARA11)  
and Aad Nienhuis, University of Amsterdam

3. [PETITION for the Establishment of An ICCE Special Interest Group](#)  
For Classroom Uses of Telecommunications  
by Chris Clark

BITNET ID: GCC1@PSUVM

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## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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### **ITEM #1**

#### **THE PC BUS- The PC Lab that Travels Lapland**

By

Mika Petasnorro, the teacher of PC-Bus  
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And

Eero Pekkarinen, ADP chief  
Institute of Business and Data Processing in Tornio  
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In Finland's small and remote villages we are faced with a number of different problems connected with the advancement of ADP (Automatic Data Processing- the equivalent of Electronic Data Processing in the US- the authors use ADP and EDP interchangeably), particularly the lack of programmes, equipment, and staff training. It was evident from the start that limited resources and great demand would necessitate a creative solution to these problems.

Thus, the PC Bus (as in motor vehicle) was born. The PC Bus carries out its work circulating around the remote villages in Lapland, offering standard basic courses in computing as well as courses tailored for special purposes.

The first PC Bus experiments were started in Finland in spring 1986 using a bus equipped with 8 microcomputers. The teacher also works as a bus driver. The bus has been used only for carrying equipment; training does not take place in the bus. The equipment is carried to a suitable classroom, e.g. to a school building, hotel or a municipal office where training sessions are held.

We have had students from every social and age group. The youngest participant in the elementary course was 14, the oldest was 64. The courses have usually been open, available to anyone who wanted to take them. In addition, there have been courses for special target groups, such as farmers, industrial clerical employees and people working for accountant firms.

In the beginning we arranged basic courses on ADP but the PC Bus proved to be practical also for arranging special courses in the evenings after the work day. The applicants, mostly students interested in basic courses, didn't have any earlier experience in the field of ADP. The course schedules consisted of the most common applications such as spreadsheet computation, word processing, different kinds of accounting programmes, book-keeping etc. The purpose of the basic courses for the time being was to provide knowledge on the use of computers that could be applied to work, to lessen fears and prejudices towards high technology and to equalize computing training opportunities for distant learners. Feedback from students indicate that these objectives have been met. All in all, students have been very satisfied with the courses.

### Future Plans:

So far we have mainly trained people in EDP, but in the future we are planning to establish a mobile tele-cottage, sort of a mobile EDP-center for visiting villages, which will be set up to initiate and develop leisure time activities among young people in villages and rural areas, especially in the electronic data processing field.

To facilitate this, we plan to set up clubs and to carry out campaigns with a special stress on EDP. Additionally we will continue to train people in EDP and develop our training programs.

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### **ITEM #2**

#### **WORKSHOP ON TELEMATICS IN EDUCATION Innovation in Education Using Electronic Field Trips**

Henk Sligte  
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Support, Survival and Cultures  
O.O.C.  
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and

Aad Nienhuis  
University of Amsterdam  
Centre for Educational Research  
S.C.O.  
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1013 KS Amsterdam

Reported by the editor.

Henk Sligte and Aad Nienhausand were convinced of two things:

1. that traditional teaching methods were not always the best approach to educating today's youth, and
2. that the computer's potential as a learning tool was not being realized.

Taken together, the attempt by most computer using educators to try to use the computer as a tool to support traditional teaching environments wasn't working.

"Looking at the use of information and communication technology within education," they said, "we often see attempts to fit in applications within the framework of these protective environments."

What his team wanted was a new approach that honored the new capabilities that computers and telematics offered.

The term for the kind of telematic projects they developed was 'the electronic field trip using a classroom-teleport.' This term was developed by Richard Civile of Quest Telematics, Washington, D.C., and elaborated by Kathleen Forsythe of Snowflake Communications Ltd, Victoria, B.C., Canada.

In close cooperation with Snowflake the first Dutch-Canadian Electronic Fieldtrip was organized. The theme of the electronic fieldtrip carried out in the first half of 1988 was Community Archaeology. Groups of pupils between 14-17 years old from the Augustinus College in Amsterdam, the Tahltan School in Telegraph Creek (in the northern part of British Columbia, Canada), and the Matthew McNair school in a suburb of Vancouver (BC, Canada) investigated their own environments and shared the results with the pupils of the other participating schools via computers which communicated via satellite.

Conversations emanating from the exchange of information led both to a more extensive comprehension of subject matter and to the bridging of intercultural and contextual differences. In a very direct way pupils learned quite a lot about the actual living conditions of their colleagues from the other side of the world.

Not only did the approach to the use of technology differ in this project, but the roles of the teacher and students were redefined as well.

"Classrooms are interconnected using computer and telecommunications to other sites. Preparation takes place in pupil task-groups. In this picture it is difficult to identify the teacher. S/he is moving through the educational environment, while the traditional role has been changed towards intermediary in interaction, living data base, and facilitator of resources, like books, encyclopedia, institutions, resource people, etc. Within the framework of the curriculum the dynamics of connectivity provide an alternative control structure, which permits an open flow of information."

Sligte and Nienhuis feel that telematics will occupy a growing position "as intermediary technology for human interaction." They caution against being swept away with the technology and urge anyone wanting to experiment with telematics to focus on the human bonding that the technology supports.

"In establishing infrastructures," they report, "it is of the utmost importance that the structure is considered as a support basis by users themselves...Human Resource Development should be seen as complementary to technological advance, and in the case of relative inexperienced actors, the major angle to the innovation of existing or the design of new social support systems."

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### **ITEM #3**

#### **PETITION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ICCE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR CLASSROOM USES OF TELECOMMUNICATION**

By Chris Clark

BITNET ID:GCC1@PSUVM

The International Council for Computers in Education (ICCE) is working to form a Special Interest Group for instructional uses of telecommunication. The purposes of the group would include dissemination of information about current projects, activities, hardware and software.

In the short term, the group has been asked to help rate the entries in Computer Learning Month's two telecommunications activities, a lesson plan and a student project. ICCE has a process for recognizing SIG's, including three main steps:

1. gather 150 signatures on a petition. As of today, I have a little more than half the required number. I have included a blank copy of the petition, and urge you to copy it and give it to friends interested in classroom telecommunications. If half of you get two responses each, we will have enough names.
2. write up a list of goals. On the petition is a space for listing projects or goals you'd like to see the group pursue. I have taken the suggestions I have received to date and formulated a draft of the goal list. I have included it for your responses.
3. propose a slate of officers. The petition asked people interested in serving as officers or newsletter editor to send a resume. I have received no less than ten resumes, and am working on contacting those people.

After all of the requirements have been met, the ICCE Board must approve the SIG, and I have been assured that this is "pre-ordained". If, as I hope, everything can be accomplished soon, I would like to call the first face-to-face meeting of the group at the annual conference of the New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education in Rye, New York (just north of New York City) on November 20, 1988. I would be happy to entertain any suggestions or receive any comments you would like to make on the information in this message or the attachments. Thanks again for your interest.

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Please print off the petition, fill it out and MAIL it in.  
[Sorry, we need signatures, so electronic submissions won't do]

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SIG/Tel-- Projects, Goals and Areas of Interest-- DRAFT ONLY!!  
Special Interest Group on Telecommunications in the Classroom (SIG/Tel)  
International Council on Computers in Education (ICCE)

- I. Projects for SIG/Tel -- DRAFT ONLY!!
  - A. Provide info on how to start a Bulletin Board System
  - B. Share case histories of BBSs
  - C. Disseminate list educational BBSs
  - D. Write a curriculum plan for using BBS
  - E. Share applications of TC in various curriculum areas
  - F. Provide info on TC in the library
  - G. Assist "Computer Learning Month" in judging
    - a. TC lesson plan

b. TC dream project

H. Provide software comparisons and/or info

a. communication software

b. BBS software

c. simulations

I. Provide hardware comparisons and/or info

J. Provide information on unusual uses of TC in education

K. Publish a manual for teachers using TC

L. Help institute ICCE BBS with international access for students and teachers

II. Goals -- DRAFT ONLY!!

A. Encourage appropriate use of TC

a. share time saving shortcuts

b. provide info on legal issues

B. Encourage research in educational TC

a. evaluation criteria

b. analyze current projects

c. effectiveness of TC in the curriculum

C. Collect and disseminate information on TC

a. available services

b. lesson ideas/plans

c. projects

d. hardware and software

D. Develop communication links

a. classroom-to-classroom for students

b. international connections/global village

## c. professional sharing for teachers

## III. Areas of Telecommunication (TC) -- DRAFT ONLY!!

- A. Electronic Messaging
- B. Conferences/Bulletins/Interest Groups
- C. Live Text Conferencing
- D. On-Line Databases
- E. Information Services
- F. New Developments
- G. Software and Hardware
- H. Special Projects
- I. Distance Learning

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**PETITION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ICCE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR  
CLASSROOM USES OF TELECOMMUNICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] work [ ] home

CompuServe ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

AppleLink Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Source ID: \_\_\_\_\_

GENIE ID: \_\_\_\_\_

BITNET: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_



ICCE member (subscribe to "The Computing Teacher")

Interested in writing for the newsletter

Interested in serving as an officer\*\*

Interested in serving as editor of the newsletter\*\*

\*\*attach a resume or letter if you'd like to be an officer or newsletter editor.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any goals or projects you'd like SIGTel to undertake:

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Return this form to:

Chris Clark  
553 Cricklewood Drive  
State College, PA 16803

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#### **ITEM #4**

### **TOWARDS A DISTANCE EDUCATION BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**By  
the editor**

Those of us in the field of distance education know what a find it is to come across a good bibliography . Therefore, the Online Journal hereby asks readers with shareable bibliographies to submit them so that they can be rebroadcast here. Don't worry about whether or not entries in your bibliographies duplicate those you may see in the Journal. At some point, I will coordinate them and present a master list.

I will accept bibliographies "as is" (don't worry about format), but do ask that you include a short description of why the bibliography was put together. The objective behind the creation of the source list will help readers gain a better understanding of its theme.

I begin this effort with a bibliography presented to me by Barry Sponder, a doctoral student who is finishing a thesis on distance education from the students' perspective. Of his thesis he writes:

"My final project is a qualitative program evaluation of the distance education effort in southwestern Alaska. I used Lincoln/Guba (85) as a model for evaluation and monitored one class,interviewed students and other students from different classes to generate categories of information, concerns, etc. Last chapter can be taken independently as a handbook for delivering

distance education to our area (chapter 5 recommendations). Cross cultural issues, autonomy, institutional support, are addressed. Designing instruction based on current principles of instructional design (Reigeluth 83, 87) is an important component."

It might also be informative to know that Barry sent me this bibliography in my response to a request for materials on the history of distance education.

#### SPONDER'S BIBLIOGRAPHY

From: Barry Sponder

BITNET ID:LFBMS@ALASKA

If you can't contact him at this ID, contact the editor.

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## **ITEM #5**

### **LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The editor is looking for references in this area. Of particular interest is the how the development of distance education reflected the social and political climate of its day.

Send responses to JFJBO@ALASKA. Thanks in advance for your help.

Should you be in a similar position of trying to establish a literature base for researching an area of distance education or communication, feel free to use the Journal as a forum to appeal to readers for help.

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## **ITEM #6**

### **THE VIDEO BOOTH**

#### **A Low Tech, Low Cost Alternative to Producing Video for Correspondence Study**

By the editor, reporting on the work of Centralized Correspondence Study (CCS) teachers at the Dept. of Education, Alaska.

Play word association with just about any correspondence teacher, and more often than not the word 'video' will elicit phrases like 'too expensive,' 'time consuming,' and 'very complicated.' Producers of educational video will tell you that finished video costs \$3000/minute, that a half hour video will take anywhere from weeks to months to produce, and requires the expertise of directors, producers, professional actors, writers and technicians. Yet, despite this, it seemed such a shame to Alaska Correspondence Teachers not to take advantage of the fact that the vast number of people they served, many of whom lived in remote areas, owned VCRs.

Perseverance and creativity prevailed. A few years ago CCS converted a storage room into The Video Booth, a production space capable of being run by one person who acted as teacher, camera person, and producer. An 8 foot by 10 foot room was retrofitted with lights, a camera, lavalier mike, monitor, a supply of tapes, and small presentation area which had chart pak and markers, and blackboard and chalk. In-service training was given on how to operate the booth, and on one of the walls is a step-by-step process as a reminder. The components of the booth were relatively fixed (lights, camera, monitor) so that teachers had to spend a minimum amount of time setting up, and so that the teaching environment was consistent from session to session.

The video booth made it possible for one person to produce a video for students very inexpensively, in a

relatively short amount of time, and without a lot of stress. The quality of the videos can't compete with the \$3000/minute variety, but most students are very pleased with this addition to correspondence material. Videos are used to deliver actual coursework (such as lectures and demonstrations), as a kind of electronic letter (answering students' questions and clarifying points in lessons), and for training. For example, when we distributed laptops and printers to correspondence students to be used in an electronic mail project, we included a video of myself and a colleague unpacking, setting up, and using the equipment. Over ninety percent of those who received the video were extremely appreciative of the fact that they didn't have to wade through manuals. Many said they felt that they could not have set up the equipment without it.

Not all the technophobes were won over. Some would still like to see a full time position staffed to run the video booth and help make productions easier and more professional.

But in the meantime, teachers who never produced videos before are augmenting their largely print-based courses with extremely useful, well received videos at minimal cost. I believe an apt phrase here is "small is beautiful."

For more information, contact the editor or Dawn Middleton, Distance Education Coordinator, State of Alaska. BITNET ID: JTDEM@ALASKA

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### **ITEM #7**

#### **INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN EDUCATION**

[Relayed to the editor by Barbara Kurshan, Janus Learning Center.]

The Symposium is being held in Jerusalem, Israel, August 21-24, 1989. Quoting from the literature:

This will be a gathering of Teachers, Administrators, and Researchers who wish to exchange ideas and experiences on the use of Telecommunications in Education. Part of the meeting will involve presentations of reports describing implementation strategies and evaluations of completed and on-going projects. In addition, the meeting will focus on Teacher and Project-leader working sessions, in which participants will generate plans for telecommunications usage in their own work places. The presentation of papers will be integrated with panel discussions, demonstrations, and poster sessions...the theme of this symposium- LEARNERS AND THE GLOBAL VILLAGE.

For more information contact Benjamin Feinstein at FEIN@HUJIARGI

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### **ITEM #8**

#### **DISTANCE Editorial: SOME FACTS ABOUT FAX AS WELL AS THOUGHTS ON HOW TO IMPROVE DISTANCE COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION USING FAX TECHNOLOGY**

By the editor

ASSUMPTION: The reader has a rough idea of what electronic mail, FAX machines, and correspondence/distance education are.

I have helped plan, implement, and maintain the gradual inclusion of information technology in many sectors of Alaska's educational community. Of the many projects I have been involved with, the addition of electronic mail to correspondence education has produced the most dramatic results.

The distances in Alaska (3 time zones in some cases) and terrain are so extreme, that regular mail service can be very time consuming and on-site visitations prohibitively expensive. Although audio conferencing and phone support meet some needs, they cannot maintain a consistent flow of communication between student and teacher. In an attempt to remedy the situation, last year Centralized Correspondence Study (which serves K-12) experimented with the use of electronic mail by distributing laptop computers to students, and training students (using video cassettes (see the article VIDEO BOOTH above) and correspondence teachers to use the university's electronic mail system. The result was a communication system which made teacher<->student correspondence, which was sporadic at best, a daily possibility. Thus, turn around time for homework or between students' questions and teachers' answers was greatly reduced and the educational flow was greatly enhanced.

At my university, reception to the use of electronic mail has not been as enthusiastic. Technophobia accounts for some of this. But upon investigating faculty reluctance, one criticism of electronic mail emerged repeatedly: the teacher cannot add hand written comments to student papers. Writing in margins, crossing out words, drawing arrows is still a very effective way for teachers to interact directly with student work. Electronic mail forced teachers to write ABOUT the problems in a student paper, instead of ON TOP of them.

At the university level this is crucial as 'the paper' is the basis of almost all humanities courses. This limitation of electronic mail frustrates some K-12 correspondence teachers as well. The fact is that while electronic mail can do a great deal to overcome the barriers of time and space which separate teachers from remote students, it is not very flexible in terms of the kind of information that can be conveyed. FAX technology provides a possible solution to this problem. When I proposed the system described below to electronic mail critics, most agreed that it at least seemed to address the problem and would be worth trying.

Although this editorial only addresses the problem of hand written comments on papers, the FAX machine is an enormously versatile machine. A basic rule of thumb is that anything that can be photocopied can be FAXed. As a matter of fact, FAXing can be thought of as photocopying at a distance. Thus hand writing, pictures, diagrams, artistic renderings, complex mathematical or scientific formulae that are difficult to word process, and, to a certain extent, photographs are all prime candidates for being transmitted via FAX.

**A LITTLE ABOUT FAX MACHINES** There are two kinds of FAX machines that concern me in this editorial: those which have scanner/printer assemblies and transmitters, and those which have only transmitters and essentially function as modems.

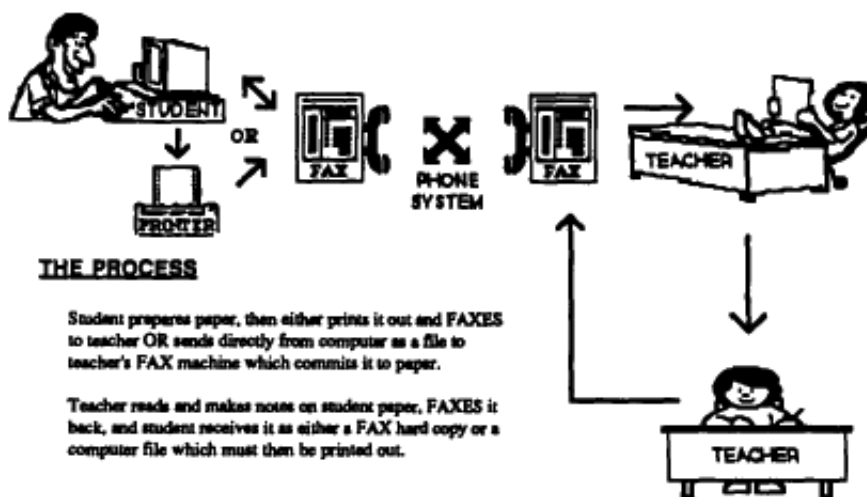
The scanner/printer assembly is the part which actually takes a picture of a document and produces a paper reproduction of the image (much like a photo copier), while the transmitter sends the image over a phone line to another FAX. Two send/receive scenarios are possible.

Scenario 1. Both student and teacher have FAXes with scanners/printers and transmitters. The student prepares an assignment using word processing software on a microcomputer, prints it out on the printer, and then FAXes the printout to the teacher's FAX machine. The teacher adds written comments to the student's work, and then FAXes it back.

Scenario 2. Only the teacher has a FAX with both the scanner/printer and the transmitter, while

the student has just the transmitter type, usually in the form of a modem-like device. The student prepares the assignment and then, skipping the print out stage, sends it directly from microcomputer (through a FAX with only transmission capabilities) to the teacher's FAX where it is committed to paper for the first time. When the assignment is FAXed back by the teacher, it arrives as a computer file which must be called up with software in the student's computer and printed out on the printer. The student's hardware needs are cheaper (no scanner, thus a cheaper FAX machine), but this arrangement limits the kinds of transmittable info the student can send to computer files. Another disadvantage is the fact that there are the additional compatibility problems in trying to hook a FAX directly to a computer. In Scenario I, the FAX had only to deal with paper input. Money willing, Scenario I is much preferable. Note: A FAX plugs into a standard phone jack, the same found in any business or home.

### **PRIMARY DELIVERY SYSTEM**



Of course this is not a stand alone system. Support is offered in many ways, through electronic mail, audio conferencing, audio, video cassettes, printed materials, on-site visits if/when possible, phone supports, diskettes and whatever else is practical for the delivery team. How the primary and secondary systems interact might be the subject of another DISTANCE EDitorial.

Comments are welcome.

### **ITEM #9**

#### **APPENDIX- ABOUT THE JOURNAL by the editor**

#### **WHAT IS THE ONLINE JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION?**

[What follows is an excerpt from the first issue of the Journal. Feel free to send suggestions to the editor.]

This first issue will be primarily concerned with the Journal itself. Once we provide an idea of

the Journal's identity and direction, we hope you will contribute to this rapidly growing field of education and communication.

## THE MEDIUM

We want short contributions, 4 screens maximum. Rather than trying to compete with a paper-based magazine which does a much better job of presenting long articles, we want contributions that present overview information. Based upon information gleaned in contributions, readers can directly contact the author for more details. **THE MESSAGE**

The issues that the Journal is concerned with fall into four basic content areas:

### Content Area #1- Distance Education

The Journal is interested in distance education as the organized method of reaching geographically disadvantaged learners, whether K-12, post secondary, or general enrichment students. Areas of interest include:

- delivery technologies,
- pedagogy,
- cross cultural issues implicit in wide area education delivery,
- distance education projects that you are involved with,
- announcements and workshops, or programs of study,
- anything else regarding the theory and practice of distance education.

### Content Area #2- Distance Communications

The Journal recognizes that education encompasses a broad area of experience and that distance education includes distance communications that fall outside the domain of formal learning. The Journal welcomes contributions that deal with serving people at a distance who aren't necessarily associated with a learning institution. The Journal welcomes information about, for examples:

- public radio and television efforts to promote cultural awareness,
- governmental efforts to inform a distant public about social issues,
- or the many training programs run by private business to upgrade employee skills.

### Content Area #3- Telecommunications in Education

Once the distance education infrastructure is solidly in place, local learners will want to tap into it, because they simply prefer learning in a decentralized setting or because they want to expand their learning opportunities and resources beyond those immediately available to them. This phenomenon, which we call 'bringing distance education home,' will grow in the coming years and we look forward to hearing from people about telecommunications in education, as a tool or a content area.

### Content Area #4- Cross Cultural Communication Efforts Particularly Between the



## US and the USSR

The Journal is interested in projects concerned with overcoming cultural barriers through the use of electronic communication. The Journal particularly looks forward to contributions concerning:

- efforts to improve electronic communication between the USSR and the US
- international electronic conferences
- cultural domination through the inappropriate use of media
- the use of telecommunications to promote understanding of the human condition

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End of the Online Journal of Distance Education & Communication