



# Online Chronicle of Distance Education & Communication

Volume #2, Issue #5

Date: July 1989

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

This is the last issue of the season. The next issue will appear sometime after the fall academic year begins. The editor plans to spend the summer testing the theory that fun and recreation soothe the data-weary mind and recommends that you do the same.

At this time last year we had over one hundred subscribers. Today we have over four hundred. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to, supported, and inspired the Online Journal. We look very forward to next year.

## **WE ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN CONSIDERING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS.**

I am happy to receive contributions during the summer, though my response time promises to be slower than during regular office hours.

Bear in mind that the electronic journal suffers from "uncompromising sequentiality"- readers can not skip past articles that don't interest them the way they can in a paper-based journal. Until our technology allows "browsing," our only alternative is to make articles brief. The electronic journal makes up for this by providing authors' IDs so that they may be contacted directly by readers for more detailed information.

Therefore, please limit articles to 4 screens (2 pages) maximum if it's possible. If you can, also please indent one tab space on the left and keep the right margin at 70. I look forward to hearing from you.

This issue at a glance:

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## THIS ISSUES CONTRIBUTIONS

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### **ITEM #1**

#### **A PROPOSAL FOR A GLOBAL NETWORK FOR CHILDREN**

by Robert D. Carlitz  
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Businesses and universities have come to appreciate the value of electronic data networks. The inexpensive technology which underlies these networks could be of equal value for pre-college education. I propose that we should provide this facility to the world's children by establishing a global network for the use of children and teachers in grades K-12.

Reading and writing provides us with the means to communicate on a global level. Electronic networks provide an immediacy to global communication and allow us to sort the resulting flow of information. This lets us direct our remarks to an appropriate audience and gain access to information on any subject we may seek.

If we begin to teach reading and writing in conjunction with the use of an electronic network, we will provide children with a new global outlook as we teach them the skills needed to exploit it. Children who grow up with this outlook will learn that many human problems are universal and that solutions to these problems may often be found through global communication and cooperation. They will learn that knowledge is distributed around the world and that this knowledge exists to be shared within the human community. Simultaneously they will master the skills which will permit them to distribute and organize the vast store of information that will be available via electronic media.

The technology that is required to set up a global children's network already exists. It is in the national interest of all developed and developing nations to extend and apply this technology. The establishment of a children's network would give an international scope to these efforts. It would provide a focus for technological development and for resolving the problems of language, standards, etc. that inevitably arise in international communications.

The first steps toward establishing a global children's network are being taken by a group which may be reached via the BITNET/UUCP address KIDSNET@ccnysci.BITNET or KIDSNET@ccnysci.UUCP.

If you would like to join this group, send a note expressing your interest to the mailing list administrator,

Patt Haring, path@ccnysci.BITNET  
or path@ccnysci.UUCP.

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[Editor's note: in the next issue of the Online Journal Robert Carlitz discusses the technical considerations of such a network.]

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## **ITEM #2**

### **TELECOTTAGES IN FINLAND**

by Professor Juhani Oksman

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## **Background**

Finland has some special reasons for being interested in telecottages. To start with, she is a Northern country, being located between 60 and 70 degrees Northern latitude. This means that the climate is very unfavorable for the agriculture and many other trades.

The area of Finland is 338 000 sq. km, from which 65 % are forests. The number of inhabitants is 4.9 million so that the population density is only about 16 per sq. km. The Northern parts of Finland are even less densely populated; in some areas the density is only 1 per sq. km. 38 per cent of Finns live in the rural areas but only about 10 % of us are employed in primary production, i.e. agriculture and forestry.

In spite of the cold climate we Finns have - through hard work and use of fertilizers - succeeded in achieving overproduction of agricultural products, which means heavy subsidies for export. To save state funds - i.e. taxpayers money - we have to cut the production in the future; this means diminishing work opportunities in the countryside.

In 1988 the GNP per capita in Finland was 14,300 USD, i.e. slightly less than that of Canada. Finland is thus a relatively prosperous country. The unemployment rate in 1987 was 5.0 %. This is a fairly tolerable number but the employment is very unevenly distributed, the South of Finland suffering of lack of working force and many parts of the North having an unemployment rate higher than 10 per cent.

A special feature of Finland is that private telecommunication companies serve most of the towns

and other densely populated areas, whereas the state-owned PTT takes care of local telecommunications in the rest of the country and of the long-distance network. This state of affairs has created a heavy competition in some fields of telecommunications, such as data networks.

## **Problems**

Finland, like most of the Western countries, is experiencing a rapid, strong structural change in her economy. The jobs tend to get concentrated in the cities and towns and in the Southern part of the country. As a result of this tendency, it is increasingly difficult to find work in the countryside, and, as a consequence, the rural population is rapidly diminishing.

Because of decreasing demand, the services in the rural areas are diminishing. Shops, schools and post offices are being closed in great numbers. Thus a vicious circle is formed, and it would lead to very effective draining of the population from the countryside if effective counter measures were not taken.

## **History of telecottages in Finland**

Finland has used the experience gained in Sweden and started exploiting the information technology to help the rural areas to remain inhabited.

In 1986, soon after the first telecottage was opened in Sweden, Prof. Kauko Rahko of the Technical University of Helsinki visited Vemdalen, the site of this cottage. After his return to Finland he took contacts to numerous communities which had shown some interest in telecommunication and information technology.

Parallel to that, Dos. Jorma Enkenberg of the University of Joensuu had a project in computer aided education going on in the nearby Kontiolahti community, and Prof. Juhani Oksman of the University of Oulu conducted a study on the use of information technology to support the economy in the rural areas in Northern Finland. As a result of this study a recommendation was made to establish a network of information technology centres in the area.

The first telecottage in Finland was opened at Kontiolahti, a community of about 10.000 inhabitants, in Oct.1987. The population has shown a great interest in their cottage, and more than 10 per cent of the inhabitants have, in one form or the other, been in contact with it.

As a result of Prof. Rahkos initiative, TC activity was started in Pello in Northern Finland near the Swedish borde, also in 1987. The suggestion of Prof. Oksman, in turn, resulted in establishing a TC in Kuusamo in Eastern Finland in Sept. 1988. Several other TCs are in the starting phase and many more in "incubation".

A society was established in January 1989 to promote the founding of telecottages in Finland, with Risto Seilola, the master of the Pello telecottage, as the first president. We can, with high probability, count with the start of several dozens of TCs in Finland in a few years.

## **What is a telecottage?**

A telecottage can be defined as a place where different kinds of telecommunication and data processing equipment are at the disposal of the inhabitants of a village or a town. The people are given courses on how to use the equipment, local entrepreneurs get help in running their business more effectively using computers, distance work can be done in the telecottage or near it, and people can use the cottage as their meeting place, perhaps watching satellite TV programs. Information can be retrieved from local and remote data banks, and telecottages can be used as terminals of distance learning, with the Master of the cottage as a coordinator of the study programs.

The telecottage idea was developed in Denmark but the first telecottage was started in Sweden, in a small village Vemdalen, in 1986. Henning Albrechtsen was the person who started it, and he has since then been enthusiastically promoting the idea. Scores of telecottages have popped up in Sweden. From there they have spread to neighboring Scandinavian countries, and now they are finding their way to other parts of the world, especially to developing countries.

## Strategy

When establishing telecottages in Finland, we have found the following points worth considering:

- Local initiative is necessary, and local strengths have to be exploited. The telecottage must result from "grass root activity", it can not be imposed on the people from above. In some cases the telecottage is intended mainly for local people, in others (e.g. near ski resorts) for tourists.
- The choice of the Master of the telecottage is important. He (or she) has preferably been born locally, has studied (and worked) elsewhere but is ready to return to his/her home village or community to help people there to use the information technology. The Master must be enthusiastic about his/her work and ready to work long days, at least in the beginning phase.
- Help from existing telecottages is useful - and available. Also national organisations (as that in Finland, mentioned above) and international organisations (Telecottages Europe = TCE and Telecottages International = TCI) have been founded with the aim to help individual telecottages in their activity.
- Cooperation with a telecompany is necessary. In Finland this means usually the PTT which serves the rural areas. Negotiations with the representatives of the PTT have resulted in PTT deciding to found, in different parts of Finland, seven experimental telecottages by adding the use of information technology to the normal activities of a post office.

A telecottage can sometime be established in cooperation with the local library. The libraries have a telephone and usually a telex and are nowadays used in electronic information retrieval from data banks. When a more many-sided set of telecommunication equipment (e.g. telefax and videotex) and some microcomputers are installed in them and when their personnel is briefed in using and in helping others to use them, a telecottage is born!

The schools with a limited number of pupils can perhaps be kept alive by using part of the time

of their teachers to give courses for the parents of the pupils and other grown-up people. This requires changing some laws but is principally possible.

If the school has, in spite of all efforts, been closed because of lack of pupils, it could be taken into new use as a telecottage. It is an ideal place to this purpose because it is usually located in the center of the village and people are used to go there.

In many villages all around Finland local people have formed village councils to promote the development of their home village. These councils could take the founding of a telecottage as one of their main activities - and take good care of it, once founded!

I am confident that the telecottages can become an important tool in developing rural areas in Finland - and in other countries as well. Public subsidies are needed in the beginning phase to equip them and get them started. In the beginning the use of the services of a telecottage should be cheap or completely free, so that the people do not hesitate to use them, but at long run the services should be charged so that the cottage becomes self-supporting. Information technology should, after all, be worth its price!

[BY Professor Juhani Oksman, ID= SO-JOK@FINOU, SO-JOK at FINOU.]

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### **ITEM #3**

**THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL: A New Era**  
**by Hans Isakson & Thomas H. McInish**  
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### **I. Introduction**

**The electronic journal of the future will operate very much like the electronic bulletin boards of today, but with features tailored to the needs of scholars in particular disciplines. Publication will consist of entering information (a paper, data base, case study, note, etc.) into an electronic data base with appropriate keywords and abstracts for subsequent automatic distribution to reviewers and interested readers. The electronic journal will greatly improve the current process of refereeing and journal editorship while reducing printing and mailing costs to a degree that will make these costs irrelevant in the publication decision.**

**The electronic journal can further the development and dissemination of knowledge in a variety of ways. Results of scholarly work will be made available to other researchers immediately. Also, contrary to current practice, enough space will be available in each issue for controversial work to be routinely published. Further, the electronic journal will tend to promote an increased emphasis on quality because tallies of citations and readership can be**

routinely generated and distributed to subscribers. Individuals seeking to have their work assessed (say for promotion and tenure decisions) typically tend to rely on such devices as peer reviews and number of citations in the work of others. More favorable peer reviews and a greater number of citations are likely to result from higher quality work. Hence, the current tendency to change the results slightly to get another publication will be minimized.

## II. Computer Usage by Scholars

The success of an electronic journal depends on the extent of computer usage by scholars. Morton and Price (1986) conducted a survey of 5,385 scholars in classics, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, political science, and sociology, receiving an excellent response rate of 71% (3,835). They report extraordinary growth in the use of personal computers. In 1980, fewer than 1% of the respondents used personal computers. In 1985, more than 90% of the respondents had access to a computer, over 50% routinely used a computer in their work and over 10% distributed research papers using electronic mail.

Morton and Price (1986) also report that of those who use computers, 73% do all or most of their text and data management and word processing on their computer; 95% rate word processing as at least somewhat important in their computer usage. Three-fourths of computer users report improvement in writing efficiency.

Another example of computer usage by scholars very relevant to electronic journals are the networking services available through BITNET. >From its beginning in 1981 with a half-dozen university sites, BITNET has grown to nearly 400 sites in the United States, with transparent gateways to 88 sites in Canada and 500 sites in Europe. Currently, over 2,000 mainframe computers are connected to the BITNET network. Since each of these 2,000 mainframe computers can support many users, BITNET can provide electronic mail and other services to thousands of scholars.

The Morton and Price (1986) survey and the phenomenal growth of BITNET suggest that computer usage by scholars is not only adequate to support electronic journals in many disciplines, but that this usage is growing so fast that electronic journals are almost inevitable.

For example, over 900 special interest user groups already exist on BITNET using LISTSERV (an electronic mail exploding-software package that allows a subscriber to send files/data to all other subscribers to the list). Indeed, some of these 900 special interest groups are organized very much like an electronic journal (for example, CRTNET on COMSERVE, a special interest group in communications that has over 3,100 users in 17 countries). To become an electronic journal, all that is needed is an editor (and editorial review process) to decide which files (papers, case studies, notes, data sets, etc.) to publish (i.e., transmit to the subscribers).

## III. Electronic Journal Features

The first electronic journals probably will operate very much like existing journals: peer review and editorial policy will determine what is published. Traditional journals, due, in part, to the high cost of publication and distribution, limit the number of pages in each

issue, magnifying the importance of editorial policies and peer review. Because electronic journals will face none of these constraints, novel approaches are possible. A free market journal could be formed that would publish any paper submitted. Such a procedure would have the merit of focusing evaluation standards on quality rather than quantity (since in this environment number of publications has no meaning). Also, novel, experimental and controversial work would be encouraged.

In this section, five data bases that potentially could be associated with an electronic journal are described. These descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive or definitive, but rather are designed to provoke discussion.

#### **A. Comment and Review (Working Paper) Data Base**

Anyone may submit a paper to the Comment and Review Data Base. Papers are identified by number only, must comply with the editorial style of the journal (including submission in an appropriate electronic form) and must include appropriate keywords/phrases and an abstract.

Anyone can comment on any paper in this data base. Comments are identified by number only and are distributed to all subscribers. Any subscriber may also comment on others' comments on any paper. All comments will be sent to the author(s), who will revise their paper based on the most constructive comments.

Currently, working papers often receive limited circulation. In contrast, electronic journal subscribers are notified when papers in their areas of interest are submitted. Papers may remain in this data base for only a limited time (say four months). But authors may revise as often as desired, resubmitting for additional review.

#### **B. Journal Level I Data Base**

Authors decide when to move a paper from the Comment and Review Data Base to the Journal Level I Data Base. (Alternately, inclusion in this data base could require nomination by several reviewers - if the reviewers were identified this might further encourage quality).

All papers in this data base will include an acknowledgement of the comments of reviewers who the author(s) identify as the source of constructive remarks.

Inclusion in this data base is considered publication in The Electronic Journal of (Field). Hence, publication in another journal would not be allowed.

Once a paper is included in this data base, it may not be revised. Authors are identified by name and address (both postal and E-mail). The frequency of both accesses and references to each paper in the data base are tabulated electronically and reported to the subscribers periodically.

(Royalties could be paid to the author(s) based on access fees their papers generate. Papers infrequently accessed are transferred to an Archives Data Base.

### **C. Archives Data Base**

**Papers that are infrequently accessed in the Journal Level I Data Base are moved to the Archives Data Base. Papers move in and out of this data base depending upon frequency of access.**

### **D. Empirical Data Base**

**Authors of papers in any of the data bases are encouraged to provide their data for inclusion in the Empirical Data Base. Each data set contains a complete description and sufficient instructions to enable subscribers to use the data. Replication and verification studies will be encouraged as authors make their data bases available.**

### **E. Journal Level II Data Base**

**As an added feature, frequently accessed papers could be moved to a more prestigious Journal Level II Data Base. Papers whose access rate falls below a threshold level are migrated back to the Journal Level I Data Base.**

### **F. Quality Control**

**Although (as proposed) any subscriber can submit a paper, the quality controls in the Journal level I and Level II Data Bases should prove useful in evaluating the scholarly contributions of faculty.**

**Additional quality controls (if needed) could be implemented in a variety of ways such as by limiting submissions to individuals providing high-quality reviews or by categorizing subscribers and limiting submissions to certain categories. Several categories of subscribers might be established, with paper submission rights granted only to certain categories.**

**Subscription fees, submission fees, etc., may be integrated into the electronic Journal if desired (if BITNET is used, fees cannot be collected--at least not directly.)**

## **IV. Summary**

**The authors propose a data base of electronically-published papers called The Electronic Journal of (Field).**

**In addition to the primary data base, other proposed data bases to be associated with this electronic journal include data bases for working papers, frequently cited papers, infrequently cited papers and data provided by authors. The authors suggest that this electronic journal would enhance the development of knowledge by allowing easy access to working papers by everyone in the profession, by making possible quick publication of fully-developed papers and by encouraging the publication of controversial work. The authors also suggest means of increasing the emphasis on quality rather than quantity.**

**Survey evidence and current practices strongly indicate that electronic journals will become an accepted method of disseminating research results.**

## References

Morton, Herbert C. and Anne Jamieson. "The ACLS Survey of Scholars: Views on Publication, Computers, and Libraries." *Scholarly Communication* (summer 1986). Available through BITNET as MORTON BULLETIN A1 from NETSERV at BITNIC.

[By Hans Isakson (ID= B581HRI@UTARLVM) & Thomas H. McInish. ]

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## ITEM #4

### STUDENT ACCESS TO AND PREFERENCE FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

by Amy Zelmer, R.N., PhD., & A.C. Lynn Zelmer, B.Ed., M.S.  
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May 1989

#### Background:

Individuals involved in distance education are prone to think that electronic communications can be used to enhance the student's involvement in a course taught by distance education methods. Enthusiasts often assume that since they personally have access to and enjoy using such electronic communications resources, there would be value in using these tools. This study is an initial attempt to investigate the electronic resources currently available to students in one distance education program at a tertiary level institution in Australia.

This study starts with the use and availability of basic resources such as cassette tape recorders, telephones, typewriters, and video cassette players. Other questions looked at microcomputers, modems, and printers to assess the potential of distributing notes and assignments by diskette, 'electronic mail' and similar services. Finally, students were asked about the availability of print resources and colleagues to assist them in their studies.

In Australia and elsewhere, educational institutions use a variety of 'electronic mail' services for their internal and some external communications. Increasingly businesses and educational institutions rely on 'fax' for quick and inexpensive communications. This is particularly so in Australia because of the billing structure for long distance telephone calls; however at the time that this survey was designed (September 1988) fax was not considered important enough to include a question on its use. With hindsight we regret the omission.

With roughly 3,200 full-time-equivalent students (4,500 individuals), Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education is a tertiary level, degree-granting, institution with a major commitment to distance education (external degrees). It serves a widely-scattered student

population primarily from Queensland, but also increasingly from other areas of the country. The Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing) program was first offered in 1987 and is only available by part-time external study. By definition, all students in this program are registered nurses; the vast majority are female and they range in age from early twenties to late fifties. For most students this will be their first experience with external studies.

### **The Study:**

The questionnaire was printed on one side of a sheet of A4 paper and distributed with the first mailing of course materials at the beginning of the 1989 academic year. All students then registered in the B.Hlth.Sc.(N) program (302) received the questionnaire and explanatory letter. The questionnaire asked students to indicate both the accessibility of the specific communication tool and the degree of their enjoyment using the tool. Students were asked to return the questionnaire with one of their early assignments; no identifying information was required on the questionnaire. There was a 20% response rate. Given the long lead time required for a reminder notice and the possibility of duplicate responses from some students no further follow-up was attempted to increase the response rate.

Responses were received from 60 students, however only 59 were received in time for inclusion in the study results. The questionnaire responses were coded and summarized by CIAE Computing Services. Questionnaires were also returned to the B.Hlth.Sc(N) program where written comments (mostly specific brands, etc.) were noted for future use. In light of the comment above regarding the use of fax machines, it should perhaps be noted that no questionnaires were returned by fax although at least one of these students now uses a fax machine to submit assignments.

The tables following this article summarize the responses to each question. Note that the percentage response has been adjusted for missing values.

In general, all of the students have good to excellent access to the basic communication tools (cassette tape recorders, telephones, typewriters, and video cassette players) and 57.9% have reasonable access to microcomputers (of a wide variety of types and capabilities). Most respondents (96.2%) have their own nursing texts as well as texts at work (85.1%), however 35.4% do not have access to nursing texts through any non-Institute library services. Most respondents (72.9%) have reasonable access to other nurses studying the same subject, and 56% have reasonable access to other nurses who previously studied the same subject.

The degree of enjoyment of various tools was more varied. Half (51.7%) enjoyed learning through cassette tapes, however 39.7% had no experience with this technique. Likewise, most (71.4%) liked learning using the video recorder; however 26.8% had no experience with video lessons and half (50.0%) had never participated in a telephone tutorial. As for the use of microcomputers, while all who had used microcomputers in education enjoyed the experience, fully 75.9% had never used a microcomputer as part of a teaching lesson in any way.

### **Conclusion:**

**For the B.Hlth.Sc.(N) program, at this time, the implications of this study are clear. Students vary in their enjoyment of all teaching media, including the traditional print and lecture methods. While we have not examined their effectiveness for teaching-learning, this study shows that students will accept the basic electronic media, especially video cassette lessons.**

**We can probably assume from the study that students use their fellow students (both current and former) for limited help with their studies. Optimum use of student colleagues and instructors via telephone would seem to require some training in the use of the telephone as an instructional tool and for conference calls.**

**We will need to ensure that any media use is integrated fully within the course of studies so that students can see its direct applicability, however students do have sufficient access to the required equipment to justify the additional costs. Computer and more advanced electronic media use can only be justified on an experimental basis and alternate methods must be provided for the majority of students.**

### Summary of Selected Questionnaire Responses:

#### a. Cassette tape recorder

Available at home	96.6%
Have reasonable access...elsewhere	3.4%%
No access to this resource	0%
I enjoy learning this way	51.7%
I do not enjoy...	8.6%
No experience	39.7%

#### c. Video player

Available at home	69.0%
Have reasonable access...elsewhere	22.4%
No access to this resource	8.6%
I enjoy learning this way	71.4%
I do not enjoy...	1.8%
No experience	26.8%

#### d. Telephone

Available at home	96.6%
Have reasonable access... elsewhere	1.7%
No access to this resource	1.7%
I enjoy learning this way	32.8%
I do not enjoy...	17.2%

No experience	50.0%
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#### **f. Microcomputer**

Available at home	26.3%
Have reasonable access...elsewhere	31.6%
No access to this resource	42.1%
I enjoy learning this way	24.1%
I do not enjoy..	.
No experience	75.9%

#### **i. Nursing texts from a library other than CIAE**

Available at home	4.2%
Have reasonable access... elsewhere	60.4%
No access to this resource	35.4%
I enjoy learning this way	89.5%
I do not enjoy...	5.3%
No experience	5.3%

#### **Acknowledgements:**

**The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. John Dekkers and the staff of the Department of External and Continuing Education for distribution of the questionnaires and Barry Cochrane, Computing Services, for compilation of the responses.**

[By Amy Zelmer, R.N., PhD., & A.C. Lynn Zelmer, B.Ed., M.S. ID=munari@civax.capricornia.oz.au!zelmera@uunet.uu.net]

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#### **ITEM #5**

**UPDATE EDNET- Oregon's ED-NET Gains Ground  
by Lynne Schrum, Univ. of Oregon  
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**Oregon's political machinery, in an effort to establish this state as a leader in distance education, may vote later this year to implement a proposed telecommunications network, but the original time frame has been pushed back substantially.**

**In the February edition of this magazine, I wrote about ED-NET and its potential for Oregon. This report will provide an update on what has happened, and what the future may hold.**

**As background, last year Oregon Governor Goldschmidt proposed that an \$8 million investment be made for an integrated system that would cover the state and would employ a mix of satellite,**

microwave, ITFS, telephone, and cable TV to offer video, voice, and computer data services. ED-NET would provide 1300 satellite receive dishes to organizations that become members. These would include all levels of educational sites, outreach centers, public and academic libraries, state and county government agency sites, and health facilities. Distance education classes would be available at all levels, and high speed data transmission would be used to facilitate access to catalogs and data-bases around the state. Also, businesses would be able to become members and make use of the equipment.

This update is a case of good news/not such good news for the ED-NET committee. The enabling legislation, S.B. 203, had two hearings in the Trade and Economic Development Committee, and left there with a recommendation of 'Do Pass'. Unfortunately, as it was about to go to the Ways and Means Committee, all bills requesting lottery funding, such as ED-NET, were put into one omnibus bill. That bill, H.B. 3075, has now been set for hearings. Now, ED-NET will have to compete with many other programs for limited resources.

In an interview with Dave Tilton, whose responsibility is to steer ED-NET through this process, I was told that the probability is still good for full funding. For one thing, there has not been much controversy or discussion on this proposal in the media and there has been no organized opposition. Also, Tilton says he feels confident because, "There are people on all the committees who are in agreement with the idea of ED-NET".

Another factor impacting the legislation concerns the position taken by the teachers. Oregon Education Association, which had not committed itself in January, is sending mixed signals. It has now voted 'not to support' ED-NET; however, they are not actively opposing the bill. In fact, a new dialogue, between ED-NET and OEA, has begun to focus on concerns about who will monitor the students and facilitate discussions in the classrooms.

In anticipation of its passage, the ED-NET committee is moving ahead with plans. They are collecting a list of possible members for the appointed permanent governing board. They are gathering specifications, so that technical design providers can begin to prepare proposals. Tilton recognizes that, given even the best possible scenario, ED-NET will not be ready for operation until early 1990; however, he is definitely feeling confident that by then everything will be ready to go. This process, while time consuming, may ultimately end in a well established network that will meet the needs of all potential users!

[By Lynne Schrum, ID= SCHRUM@OREGON.]

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## ITEM #6

**THE EDTECH EXPERIENCE- A look at the first few months of the EDTECH Mailing List  
by Mark Rosenberg (ID= 21602MR@MSU.BITNET)  
& Vickie L. Banks (ID= 21602VB@MSU.BITNET)**

This account offers a behind the scenes view from two list owners of the work and advantages of starting a mailing list on BITNET for those who are thinking of starting one and/or those who subscribe.

**On February 10, 1989 a group of graduate students and faculty at Michigan State University (MSU)**

started the Educational Technology mailing list (EDTECH@OHSTVMA). We had been learning about electronic mail and local conferencing, and decided it would be worthwhile to expand our discussion to include people from other universities and institutions around the world. After researching the procedure for starting a list, we formulated a purpose: to promote discussions among faculty, students, and "interested others" in the field of educational technology about hardware, software, curriculums, & technology in education, and to study the development of EDTECH itself as a vehicle for extending traditional learning environments through telecommunications.

Initially the new EDTECH list was announced on other mailing lists and promoted at several education conferences. A hard copy announcement also went out to all university departments that listed an Educational Technology program in AECT's 1988 Educational Technology Yearbook. The first week subscriptions were moderate (10 or 11) mostly from Michigan State. By the end of February there were approximately 17 people subscribed, 12 from MSU. During February there were 6 messages (.3/day) sent to the EDTECH list. 100% of the traffic originated from MSU. The content of the messages was personal introductions.

As March began, subscriptions and messages to the EDTECH list started to pick up dramatically. Topics ranged from conference announcements to requests for information, references, and resources, but personal introductions continued to account for a substantial amount of the traffic flow. By the end of March there were close to 100 people subscribed to the list and 56 messages (1.8/day) had been sent. 43% of list traffic originated from MSU.

In April we noticed that the signal to noise ratio (messages sent to EDTECH that were not meant for the list like "Please subscribe me" or "John, could you send me a copy of that paper you mentioned") increased dramatically. So on April 23rd we began to moderate the list. This means that instead of messages being distributed immediately to everyone on EDTECH, they are first forwarded to the list moderator, who intercepts and redirects private mail and command messages. Thus list members do not have to sift through extraneous list mail.

In late April a sudden shift in the content and style of the list occurred. Until then most EDTECH messages dealt with personal introductions, a specific question and answer, a conference announcement, or mistakes (mail not meant for list distribution). There were no extended conversations on particular topics. On April 25, a question posted about screen capture for instructional purposes and related copyright questions started the list on its first extended interaction. During the last few days of April and the first several days of May there were 16 messages from 7 different members revolving around the copyright issue. Some were more questions and answers, some contained references, and others were speculation on possible scenarios.

During April there were 82 messages (2.7/day) with 29% of the traffic from MSU. EDTECH had 130 subscribers at the end of April.

In May the discussion continued to expand with the intensity and richness that started during the copyright postings. It evolved to encompass broader and more theoretical themes like preparing teachers to use technology, and OLD technology (books and chalkboards) vs NEW technology (hypertext and computers).

People continued introducing themselves and their work, and sharing references and articles with each other, but the EDTECH list matured somewhat and became a forum for extended conversations among

**groups of people on a number of topics. It offered an informal conversational environment that fostered participation, networking, and relationships.**

**At the end of May EDTECH had grown to approximately 180 members from 90 institutions and 15 different countries. During May there were approximately 100 messages (over 3/day) and only 18% originated from MSU.**

**At present EDTECH is particularly useful in making professional contacts with people who share similar interests around the world.**

**It is also beginning to be a place for formulating group projects and inter-university courses enabling students and faculty to use the list and e-mail as a medium of collaboration. The first collaborative project got underway at the end of May. Several people are working together on a Hypercard stack that will act as a directory of list members, and allow access to archived EDTECH messages by key words, message threads & list members. The project will aid in developing a stronger sense of community by having an entry about each list member with relevant information (even possibly a picture) so that 21602MR@MSU becomes a real person and not just a userid. The stack will also facilitate people accessing and making complete use of the wealth of references and other resources being contributed to EDTECH.**

**Given EDTECH's current success, members of the founding group plan to continue exploring how to nurture and develop this environment. As the number of electronic mailing lists like EDTECH grows, the study of how to design, implement, and maintain them will become increasingly important.**

**By studying the discussions and dynamics of the EDTECH list, we hope to discover methods of effectively managing a list as an educational medium. We expect that list subscribers will begin collaborative articles, projects, courses, data collection, surveys, and reading groups.**

**As this medium has proven to be exceptionally useful for linking people working on similar courses or projects, we are also exploring the possibilities of sponsoring several smaller sub-lists dedicated to highly specific topics (example: a sublist for people teaching introductory courses in using computers for teachers, or a sublist on the uses of computers in social science in the lower elementary grades, etc.).**

**We envision that the EDTECH list will be a more general forum for discussions about Educational Technology and a meeting place for those who may want to participate in a variety of more focused conversations.**

**For more information about the EDTECH list, send mail to:**

**Vickie L. Banks (21602VB@MSU.BITNET)**

**or**

**Mark Rosenberg (21602MR@MSU.BITNET)**

**or subscribe to EDTECH by sending the message:**

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**ITEM #7**

## **ONE USER'S FrEd MAIL EXPERIENCE**

**by Don Watkins**

**ID= V076GZHB@UBVMSC**

**I attended a teleconference in April of 1988 dealing with classroom integration of telecommunications. One of the principal communications networks open to elementary and secondary students at this time is a network called the FrEdMail Network.**

**FrEd is an acronym for "Free Education". It was started by a gentleman, Al Rogers, in California. From what I gathered Al was a teacher who became interested in the implications of telecommunications among groups of elementary and secondary students. He was one of the panelists for the teleconference and told of how groups of students all over the United States and several foreign countries were linked via normal telephone lines using modems and microcomputers.**

**These microcomputers in their respective schools were "tied" to nodes which were in turn linked to other nodes throughout the network. There was no line charge for any of this other than those charges that might be incurred from the telephone company itself.**

**This notion of linking students at our school(Franklinville Central, Franklinville, New York, USA) with groups of students from around the country and perhaps the world was exciting. I approached some of my students regarding this idea and they were of course delighted. Some of the teachers I approached were enthusiastic while most were very skeptical.**

**I did manage to "logon" to a node in New Jersey(Glassboro State College) which was the closest node to our school. Through the help of the system operator, Mr. Kenneth Rideout, I was able to arrange a telecommunications link with a couple of elementary classes in Moore County, North Carolina. Moore County is primarily a rural area like ours and there was some commonality for the students. We managed to have two complete E-mail exchanges which was exciting for the teachers and the students involved.**

**There was some difficulty encountered due to hard disk "crashes" at the node in New Jersey. This was discouraging to all of us involved. However, FrEdMail gives students an opportunity to write for an audience other than their teachers. It also can help promote some social skills and understanding among students from varied socio-economic backgrounds.**

**I would be remiss if I failed to mention that we owe our success with the FrEdMail Network to the third grade class of Mrs.Diane Watkins and the learning disabled class of Miss Kim Whitling. Mr. Richard Wachter, our school superintendent was instrumental in approving the purchase of modem to be connected to the microcomputer. Due to his foresight and the efforts of these two classes in Franklinville and the two in North Carolina we moved closer to classroom integration of telecommunications in an elementary school.**

**[Note: Don has prepared a much larger article about his use of FrEd Mail which he would be happy to send to you upon your request. His ID is V076GZHB@UBVMSC.]**

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**ITEM #8**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONFERENCES, REQUESTS, & OTHER SOUND BYTES**

### **1. Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) Conference.**

**Submitted by: Mike Molenda, Indiana Univ., ID= MOLEND@IUBACS**

**"The Role of Educational Technology in Distance Education" is the theme of this summer's Professional Development Seminar sponsored by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). The seminar will explore issues of program design, educational policy, and research/theory as well as provide demonstrations of distance education for school, college, and corporate instruction.**

**Featured speakers include Jason Ohler, Univ. of Alaska; Robert Diamond, Syracuse Univ.; Lorne Parker, Parker Communications; and James Zigerrell, formerly Dean of the Chicago Television College.**

**Seminar site is Indiana Univ., Bloomington; July 29-August 1.**

**Registration fee \$245 for non-members.**

**For further info contact: Michael Molenda, Indiana University (MOLEND@IUBACS), or phone (812) 855-1791.**

### **2. Zenith Recognizes Teleconferencing as Educational Innovation Submitted by: Norman Coombs**

**NRCGSH@RITVAX.BITNET  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Rochester, NY USA**

**Zenith Data Systems sponsored the Masters of Innovation Competition in 1989 to seek out special campus achievements with personal computers. The competition was designed to encourage PC use in key academic areas and to reward those students, faculty and staff members who are using their PCs in the most innovative applications.**

**More than 850 students, faculty and staff submitted papers describing how they use their PC-compatible applications to assist educational study in five fields: business, education, liberal arts and sciences, fine and applied arts, and engineering and computer science. "As a company committed to education," Zenith officials stated, "we want to encourage students, faculty and staff to creatively explore the potential of computers within their fields of study." They said that they want to "reward those masters of innovation who consistently push computing forward into new and exciting frontiers in education."**

**I was fortunate enough to be selected as the faculty first prize winner in education for using computer conferencing to teach history to distance students. Some of my students are hearing impaired, and I am blind. The computer conference enables us to participate in a genuine main stream experience with physical disabilities vanishing altogether. I hope that this recognition will help advance the acceptance of distance education in general.**

**Other faculty winners covered a wide range of applications. Charles Read, from Temple University developed an application, "Visual Matching of Celestial Targets", which uses Zenith portables to study visual Judgment of celestial targets in terms of their apparent size and distance in relation to their elevation from the horizon. He is looking for possible reasons why visual Judgments are subject to illusion. Willam Miller from the University of Missouri has designed an application that tests wooden utility poles for decay, rot or degradation using a Zenith Data Systems portable computer.**

**Winners received \$5,000 of Zenith equipment both for themselves and a similar grant of equipment was given to their institution.**

**Winners were flown to Chicago to demonstrate their applications. Awards were presented at a banquet on Saturday, April 29 by the zenith president.**

### **3. ISTE: Merger of ICCE and IACE**

**Submitted by: L. Daniel York, ID= D\_YORK@UNHH**

**At the National Educational Computing Conference, held in Boston, Mass., on June 20-22, 1989, it was announced that the International Council for Computers in Education (ICCE) and the International Association for Computing in Education (IACE) had just merged to form the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). The new organization was "created in recognition of the need for leadership provided by a single, comprehensive organization, dedicated to improving instruction through the innovative use of technology."**

**For more information, contact ISTE at:**

**BITNET: MOURSUND@OREGON**

**or**

**COMPUSERVE: 70014,2177**

**or**

**ISTE**

**University of Oregon**

**1787 Agate St.**

**Eugene, OR 97403 USA**

**Phone: (503) 668-4414**

### **4. New Special Interest Group for Telecommunications**

**Submitted by: L. Daniel York, ID= D\_YORK@UNHH**

**Also at NECC '89, the formation of a new ISTE Special Interest Group for Telecommunications (SIGTEL) was announced.**

**"SIGTelecommunications is a network of educators interested in computer- based communications -- computers alone or in combination with television, radio, telephone, or other media. SIGTEL supports and promotes telecommunication as a tool for the enhancement of learning and the delivery of instruction.**

**The goals of SIGTEL are:**

1. to promote appropriate use of telecommunications in learning,
2. to initiate and encourage research on instructional telecommunications,
3. to collect and disseminate research on instructional telecommunications, and
4. to assist in the development of communications links for students and educators.

For more information, contact Chris Clark, newly elected President at:

Bitnet: GCC1@PSUVM  
or  
ISTE SIG/Tel  
1787 Agate St.  
Eugene, OR 97403

5. **Call for Papers and Conference Prospectus for WCCE/90**  
Submitted by: L. Daniel York, ID= D\_YORK@UNHH

The Fifth World Conference on Computers in Education (WCCE/90) will be held July 9-13, 1990 in Sydney, Australia, sponsored by the International Federation for Information Processing and the Australian Computer Society.

"WCCE/90 is an international conference and papers are welcome from all nations. Papers are invited from individuals as well as from representatives of organizations, regions or nations. Colleagues from the Asian-Pacific region are particularly invited to take advantage of this conference.

Prospective authors should submit original papers in English (the official conference language) on new and emerging themes in educational computing. Through its major streams, associated mini-conferences and non- paper sessions, WCCE/90 will stress the diversity of ways computers interact with learning in all educational environments. Papers on educational computing themes not encompassed by the major streams and associated mini- conferences, below, are nevertheless welcome for consideration.

Registration fees at the 'early-bird' rate will be offered to authors whose papers are accepted for publication in the Conference Proceedings."

The six WCCE/90 Conference Streams are:

1. Informatics in Elementary Education
2. Research on Educational Applications of Information Technologies
3. Informatics Education at the Secondary Level
4. Distance Learning
5. Advanced Curriculum Projects in Information Processing
6. Vocational Education and Training

In addition, there are 4 WCCE/90 Associated Mini-Conferences

1. Advanced Research on Computers in Education (Japan, July 18-20)
2. Computers in Education: National Perspectives (New Zealand, July 4-6)

**3. CBT/90 (Computer-Based Training)****4. Teleteaching/90**

**There will also be non-paper sessions of consisting of workshops, panel sessions, poster sessions, and public meetings.**

**Draft papers must be received n Australia NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 1, 1989.**

**Notification of acceptance will be in January 1990.**

**Further information may be obtained by writing: WCCE/90**

**P.O. Box 319**

**Darlinghurst, NSW 2010**

**AUSTRALIA**

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**ITEM #9****DISTANCE EDitorial- WHAT ELECTRONIC MAIL OFFERS EDUCATORS-**

Reflections of an Online Teacher

By the editor

ID= JFJBO@ALASKA

Recently I was asked by the State of Alaska to write about my experiences as an online teacher. What follows is an excerpt from that report (titled "The Many Faces of Electronic Mail"), which focuses on how electronic mail has inspired new thinking among teachers.

**Background**

Although Alaska's statewide computer network, the University of Alaska Computer Network (UACN), offers access to many services, such as word processing, computer languages, statistical packages, etc., the majority of its traffic is electronic mail. Thus the 8,000 teachers who are scattered over Alaska's more than a half million square miles have had a way to communicate but have needed a basic understanding of how the system works and what they could do with it.

To address this need, in 1985 Dr. Armand Seguin of UAS's Vocational Education program offered a course which was taken completely online via the UACN, ED 193/493: Using Electronic Mail in Vocational Education. The course quickly outgrew its intended audience of vocational educators, and other versions were developed by Dr. Seguin and myself and offered as a general education course to anyone within certain guidelines: A 400 level course was offered to certified teachers and administrators, and a 100 level course, requiring less work, was open to everyone else. Though the course has evolved considerably, it continues today administered by Outreach and the UAS Educational Technology Program. In its many permutations has served over 400 students in the last three years.

**The Results**

The course has succeeded largely without advertising and has received almost entirely positive feedback from students.

There are several logistical and pedagogical reasons for this. The class is open-entry, open-exit, so students don't need to plan taking it within the semester system. It is performance-based, so students always have a good idea of how well they are doing. Because the UACN can be accessed 24 hours a day, students can work when their busy schedules allow. And because people learn privately, it tends to diffuse a potentially threatening, (and in a group setting, embarrassing) situation. For this reason, it appeals to a diverse student body whose members would not ordinarily gather together for group instruction, such as superintendents, teachers, and office personnel.

But ultimately the course works well because it offers an extremely valuable service, particularly for remote educators. The course focuses on those functions of the electronic mail system which are most popular and useful for educators, including sending and receiving individual and group mail, sending and receiving word processing files, using bulletin boards, and helping users help themselves through the system's explain and help functions. Educators find they suddenly have a tool that is immediately useful in pursuing relationships with colleagues, resources, and students at a distance that would otherwise simply not be possible. To many, electronic mail is an end to isolation.

## Inspirations

But email was more than helpful- it was inspirational. As part of the course, students were asked to brainstorm ways to use electronic mail as educators. Many of the ideas were fresh, exciting, such as:

- SCHOOL COUNSELORS wanted to use email to contact other counselors in the state for insight and information in dealing with particular student problems, especially as they related to counseling in remote areas.
- STATE EDUCATION OFFICIALS saw immediate use for it as a tool to keep in closer contact with central office staff, key advisory groups, legislators. They saw email shortening the lag time between requesting and receiving information they needed in order to make statewide policy decisions.
- MATH TEACHERS had creative ideas for the use of email, like the creation of "Challenge Math," a contest which would post math problems and collect answers via electronic mail. As a result of the email course, the head of the statewide math consortium used email to send out audio conference agenda and gather input from members.
- SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS envisioned using email with the deaf, cerebral palsy victims, and people with other handicaps to reduce their isolation and put them in better contact with special educational resources. They also saw it as a promising administrative tool to be used to coordinate special ed. efforts within districts, and to exchange critical medical data with medical institutions much more efficiently.

- LIBRARIANS cited a number of reasons to use email, among them, to expand "our pitifully small library," to significantly reduce the time and paper work needed in inter-library loans, and to reduce the number of times librarians in a district need to meet face-to-face to exchange information. My first job as a telecommunications teacher was to train all of our local school district's librarians to go online for just these purposes. When I last checked, they were still active emailers and extremely appreciative of the time, energy, and busy work that email spared them.
- BUSH TEACHERS wanting to take summer school recency courses saw using email as a way to obtain guidance from university teachers about course offerings to better enable them to plan their summers. Many remote teachers noted that email could also be used to help compensate for the communication lost due to the severe travel restrictions caused by falling state revenues. Some commented that as a communication system for those trying to reach them from outside the school (like parents), it was preferable to phoning, which often interrupted their day. One teacher suggested creating an occupation bulletin board to help students understand the employment opportunities beyond their own communities.
- WRITING TEACHERS had a number of ideas for the use of email, such as the creation of a creative writing bulletin board through which students could share poetry, fiction, and essays on an informal basis, as well as in a contest atmosphere. In addition, some wanted to pursue 'cultural awareness' by having students email with other students around the state in order to compare and contrast their communities and environments. One suggested a writing project in which students create character sketches of email partners they had never seen in order to determine how much of one's personality could be revealed via electronic mail.
- SCIENCE TEACHERS saw joint statewide projects, such as animal migration tracking and weather data collection. One suggested starting a weather forecasting service for the state based upon student efforts.
- SOME TEACHERS SAW EMAIL AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS within THEIR SCHOOL. One commented that while individual attention was an impossibility because of class size and diversity, email might be effective for reaching some students because it adapted to the teacher's schedule. Another saw it as a means for the distribution of lunch menus, quizzes and legitimate note passing for students, as well as way to reduce the amount of paper memos for staff.

## Conclusion

Many of the suggestions for electronic mail's use fall within a few categories: convenience of communication, equity of access to resources, new styles of cooperative learning, more efficient administration, and increased student motivation. While some students were ambivalent about electronic mail's use in education, most saw it as extremely worthwhile and no one saw it as useless. The most negative comments centered around very practical matters such as the high cost of using email for remote communities without a local node or AKNET access, unsympathetic administrators who do not understand email's

educational value and did not support the need for things like modems and phone lines in a classroom, and the lack of support for email at the state level as a bonafide instructional tool. Rural districts have at least one ID on the UACN courtesy of the Dept. of Education, but quite often it is used administratively rather than instructionally. More and more teachers are realizing the power that email has, particularly in remote areas, but claim they need their own IDs and administrative support to turn that power into a classroom reality.

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## **ITEM #10**

### **ABOUT THE JOURNAL**

#### **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:

#### **1. 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, workshops, or programs of study,
- anything else regarding the theory and practice of distance education.

#### **2. 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.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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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To subscribe to The Online Journal of Distance Education and Communication, send the following command to `LISTSERV@UWAVM` : `SUB DISTED your_full_name`

All contributions should be sent to `JADIST@ALASKA`

Any other questions about DISTED can be sent to:

Jason B. Ohler, Editor  
`JFJBO@ALASKA`  
or  
Paul J. Coffin  
`JXPJC@ALASKA`

Disclaimer: The above were the opinions of the individual contributors and in no way reflect the views of the University of Alaska.

End of the Online Journal of Distance Education & Communication