

TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

Number 50

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E-Learning *in* Schools Spells Extinction *of* Schools

The Minister of Education Trevor Mallard recently said the following to a meeting of the Correspondence School National Parents' Association:

Like the Internet itself, there is no way of stopping E-learning. It is no longer a question of whether or not we will implement E-learning in our schools, but whether or not we will do it well and use it to advantage our learners.

In conventional learning most students attend a school in their local community: E-learning enables students to "attend" multiple and distant institutions.

In conventional learning classes are scheduled according to school hours and timetables that suit teachers: E-learning enables students to determine the times when learning best suits them.

In conventional learning students are directed to work individually or in groups: E-learning allows students to choose to work individually or collaboratively with people who may or may not be in their regular class.

(From The School Daily, 23 May 2001, <http://www.theschooldaily.com/articleView.asp?articlePK=6501>)

It would seem conventional schooling is going to increasingly resemble our home education environments. One college is already hastening the day when school campuses will be unnecessary by establishing the country's first wireless college campus. Students can browse intranet-based school resources and surf the internet from a laptop

anywhere on the school grounds. Of course it won't be long before one can use a laptop in this way from anywhere in the country.... and possibly from most places in the Western world for that matter, just like our cell phones.

Students at Pakuranga-based boys college St Kentigern are already used to a high-tech environment -- nearly all of the school's 1150 students have their own laptops. This level of computer usage came from supportive parents and the school's close relationship with laptop market leader

Toshiba.

Now a partnership with networking giant Cisco and wireless broadband operator Walker Wireless is giving St Kentigern staff and form 1 to 7 students the ability to use their laptops to access a wireless local area network (WLAN).

Each laptop is being fitted with a Cisco Aironet wireless card, which connects to the college network through 31 Aironet access points placed around the school and installed by Walker Wireless.

The use of wireless devices avoids the need for the school to install cables and allows students to have computer access in every

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Computers Can Stifle Creativity

Computers are a regular feature in classrooms nationwide.

But a Canadian author is questioning whether they should be an integral part of children's learning.

Journalist and parent Alison Armstrong says there is little evidence to suggest that computers improve children's achievement in school, and that too much time spent on computers can stifle creativity and may cause physical harm.

In her book *The Child and the Machine*, Armstrong says that because computers can be used in schools does not mean they should be. "In the absence of any precise educational goals, computerising classrooms is merely an excuse to use expensive

toys."

But New Zealand educators say computers are a useful tool and that research here has shown computers can improve student achievement.

Armstrong said a research review by co-author Charles Casement and visits she had made to elementary schools (ages 5 to 12) in Canada and the United States found that computers were often used in unproductive ways.

Many programmes were repetitive games or "fill in the blanks."

The internet was often used to play games and many children found it hard to discern useful information.

Often computers were bought at

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classroom.

Walter Chieng, the school's director of information technology, said students using the wireless network would enjoy data rates of up to 11 megabits a second, and be able to connect their laptops from within 100m of any access point.

"They are able to download their schoolwork for the day in seconds. As well as giving access to Microsoft applications like Word, Excel and Publisher, the school has invested in subject-specific software."

He added that students would have access to Britannica Online, a "Britannica Encyclopedia plus CNN-type resource," as well as software used by thousands of open university students in the US.

But the introduction of the technology has come with some ground rules. WebSense content-filtering software and the school's firewall will be used to ensure students do not deviate to non-educational websites, and for

security reasons use of the laptops will be limited to designated areas around the school. [Those 1150 students will find a way around the filters and firewall within a week or two, and the press of numbers nationally and internationally wanting access via this method to unlimited educational -- and other -- resources, will drive the market to make this wireless technology available from as many areas as possible and drive the educational establishments to make their material freely available: see the story of M.I.T. doing exactly this already, *TEACH Bulletin* No. 48, April 2001.]

And Mr Chieng said any fears from parents that their children would be at risk from wireless radiation were unfounded.

"The output of the entire network is less than one-tenth the power from a standard GSM (global system for mobile communications) cellphone."

(Story by Peter Griffin, NZ Herald online, 22 May 2001, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storyprint.cfm?storyID=190127>)

access to a computer and that every school should have high-speed access to the Internet. "Computer literacy" is a much-heralded goal for all children and is seen as a prime focus for instruction at every age and in every subject. All this is being promoted in the name of education reform, which purports to restructure U.S. schools in order to make them more compatible with the needs of the post-industrial Information Age.

There is, however, a great historical irony in this widely accepted position. By urging the rapid integration of computers into classrooms, the champions of reform are unwittingly promoting the demise of the schools they supposedly want to strengthen. For it turns out that computers are the Trojan Horse of schooling as we know it, and by welcoming them into their midst, educators are hastening the day on which the schools they have designed will fade into oblivion.

The Way We Were

The chief justification for the existence of mass schooling in the United States—a relatively recent phenomenon, barely 150 years old, with little historical experience to call upon—was to take the unformed, raw material on which all societies are based—namely, children—and transform them, through instruction, into educated adults having the knowledge, skills, and ambitions they need to serve society.

The students were required to place absolute trust in the validity of the program laid out for them by their adult guides and to make every effort to fulfill the expectations made of them.

As the 20th Century progressed, and as life became more complex, educators worked hard to justify this trust, by constantly revamping and renewing and restructuring and reforming the system they controlled. This never-ending activity created the impression among parents, the lay public, and among educators themselves, that everything necessary was being

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TEACH Bulletin

is a monthly publication of the Home Education Foundation, and is concerned with those things which may impact on home educators. Articles will deal with political developments, statist and professional trends, correspondence with educationalists, and other items of general interest to home educators. Information herein is not to be construed as legal advice. Opinions expressed in TEACH Bulletin are those of the writer and should not be assumed to reflect those of the Home Education Foundation Trustees or Board of Reference Members.

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Hear, my son, your father's
instruction, and reject not your

A fascinating development of this increased frenzy by schools to go hi-tech is that they are sowing the seeds of their own certain destruction. Home education is clearly the wave of the future, as one can see from the following edited article by Daniel Greenberg.

There is almost universal agreement among American educators and laypersons that one of the most important features of a modern school is an up-to-date technology infrastructure. It has become a common mantra that every student should have

Trading Post



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Another Day by Day,
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Scolastic.....\$18

All prices not inclusive of P&P
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Contact:

Linda Ingles
ph. (09) 420-7907
ingles7@ihug.co.nz

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done to keep schools abreast of the latest developments and transformations taking place in the world at large. Continuous change in schools was taken to be the mark of the unflagging relevance of schools to the conditions of an ever-changing reality. But this was to be an illusion that could not be sustained indefinitely.

Our New World

In the closing years of the last century, a new world came into being. The particular instrumentality for this cultural upheaval was the computer, in all its manifestations, and the various networks to which the computer could be linked, prime among them the Internet.

The full implications of the transformation that has taken place, and is continuing to take place with ever greater momentum, have scarcely begun to be appreciated, even by the most farseeing observers. But some of the simpler ramifications of this revolution, as they pertain to U.S. schools, are clearly visible on the horizon.

First and foremost among these is the plain fact that, through the cyberworld, children of all ages (as well as adults, of course) now can link themselves directly to the most up-to-date sources of information on virtually any topic they choose to pursue. In other words, a person who wants to find out about something now has the ability to seek out world-class expertise; to access it at will, whenever he or she wants to; and to follow it up to whatever level of excellence he or she desires to attain. There is no way that the vast majority of teachers, whatever their training, can ever hope to match in their classrooms the caliber of instruction children can receive at will from sources of their own choosing.

In addition, it is a simple matter for any person to link up with others having the same interests, anywhere in the world, and to engage in mutually enriching conversations and interactions that further enhance the understanding

of all the participants.

Second, and no less significant, is the almost infinite diversity of activities and interests that are accessible to all children—a diversity that stands in stark contrast to the narrowly limited field of view presented by the handful of subjects selected by anonymous pedagogues as the proper focus for all students. By comparison to the wealth of variety available on the World Wide Web, on CD-ROMs, on DVDs, and on a host of other storage media, the world of schools and curricula seems hopelessly sterile, arcane, and irrelevant. No child who has surfed the Web on his or her own can ever turn back to the dry pages of a school textbook, or the dry elements of a school assignment, without realizing how exciting the former is and how drab the latter.

American [and NZ] educators, innocent of these implications, tout the value of computers and the Internet in their schools, primarily because they have heard that these are the tools of the future, and they want to appear modern and up-to-date. So they bring the hardware into the schools—and then they use it in lieu of, and just like, the standard hard-copy textbooks and workbooks of old. They impose stringent limits on students' free access to these electronic paraphernalia and prescribe in detail how, where, when, and for what purpose students are to use them.

But, once introduced into the schools, this Information-Age equipment will not remain restricted and limited for long. One way or another, surreptitiously or overtly, during class hours or after school, students will discover the limitless power that their new paraphernalia can bestow upon them and will increasingly withdraw from the humdrum life and demands of their schools. It will become harder and harder to keep them bound to the confines of prescribed curricula and the

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mediocrity of the average instructor. Slowly at first, more rapidly as time goes on, the very *raison d'être* of traditional schools will disappear, and students will take their education into their own hands and pursue it according to their own lights.

All this will happen the more rapidly because of the eagerness with which innocent and naïve school people have rushed to introduce the instrumentalities of the Information Age into their classrooms. They have welcomed the cyber-Trojan-Horse into their midst, and as surely as in ancient Troy, it will end up being the cause of their extinction.

(From *TECHNOS Quarterly, For Education and Technology*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Spring 2001, "The Trojan Horse of Education", by Daniel Greenberg, <http://www.technos.net/journal/volume10/1greenberg.htm>)

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the expense of other areas of learning such as the arts, hands-on science and physical education.

Armstrong said that given the costs of technology, the question had to be asked if it paid off.

"We would have to say it hasn't."

The increasing amount of time children spent in front of computers was often at the expense of their creative talents and could be damaging to their health, she said.

North America was experiencing an epidemic of obesity among young people, and more were suffering from repetitive strain injury.

Professor John Hattie, the head of education at Auckland University, said New Zealand research had

shown computers could improve student achievement but were one of many things to make a difference.

Studies here had found the best improvements were in basic mathematics. Reading showed little evidence of gains.

Professor Hattie said computers were "about average in the teachers' arsenal" and how they were used determined their success.

"Can you imagine children exiting from our schooling system and not having been exposed to using computers as part of their thinking?"

Geoff Lovegrove, president of the NZ Principals Federation, said it was right to question the big investment in computers, given the cost. But no one had ever said computers would raise children's learning.

(Rebecca Walsh, education reporter, NZ Herald on-line, 1 May 2001, <http://www.NZHERALD.co.nz/storyprint.cfm?storyID=186123>)

Girls' Use of the Internet

by Wayne Howes
Intermediate School Teacher

68.5% of the young females surveyed were using the Internet most days. 33.5% had a personal face to face meeting with someone they had met on the Internet. 95.5% use the Internet at home, yet 75% stated that their use of the Internet was occasionally or never supervised by an adult. 44.5% use the internet at school, yet 58% stated that their use of the internet at school is monitored only occasionally or never by an adult.

Keeping in mind that only 347 respondents were surveyed, I wonder if this could be said to be representative of all adolescent female users of the Internet. If it is, I find the figures relating to school use of Internet somewhat alarming.

In our school, which happens to be an Intermediate School we have a policy that states our students should not use the Internet unless an adult is present in the room supervising them. In fact students need to have a special code for logging on to use the Internet, which at this stage is the Teacher's Individual Password. That is, the teacher must log on to the computer for students to be able to access the Internet. Although it is taking responsibility away from students it is also placing support for students should they find themselves in undesirable Website situations. It also places the teacher in a situation where they are responsible for teaching their students safe user practices. How do other schools supervise student use of the Internet? Is that figure of 58% occasionally or never monitored student use typical of what really happens in our schools? I would hope not.

Student E-ID Cards

Students at Martin Luther King Jr. Junior High School in Sacramento, California, will soon start carrying ID cards with computer bar codes so officials can track their attendance throughout the day, whether they are getting on a school bus, entering a classroom or buying lunch in the cafeteria.

Bus drivers, teachers and cafeteria staff will use hand-held computers to scan the photo ID cards, giving them immediate access to students' schedules, parent-contact information and health data -- and enable immediate printing of detention slips.

"Such systems reduce paperwork and provide a better tool to fight truancy," said John Amatruda, president of School Technology Management, an ID-system manufacturer.

(Sacramento, CA Bee, 19 May 2001, http://www.sacbee.com/news/news/local01_20010519.html)

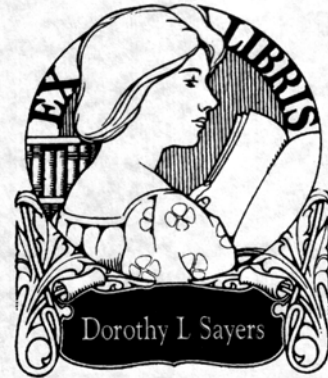
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by Craig S. Smith

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Coming Events

South Island Home Education Tour

Featured speakers: Craig & Barbara Smith plus local experts.

Tue June 19 Wellington-Picton

Tue June 19 Nelson

Contact Phillipa, (03) 522-4213 p. ashton@xtra.co.nz
or Kathy, ph. (03) 522-4291
Stoke Baptist Ch. Hall, Main Rd.
3:30pm registration. Creche avail.
4:00pm Introduction to Home Education - information for those thinking about Home Education and motivational for those already Home Educating. This includes a Question and Answer time.
5:30pm Pot Providence tea: please bring a plate of finger food
6:30pm Two elective sessions
Elective one with Craig - The Fathers Role and a Vision for the Future.
Elective two with Barbara - Home Education for Life....Burnout, Preschoolers, etc.
8:00 Supper

Wed June 20 Hokitika

Contact Sonja, ph. (03) 755-5300 mcgarveys@xtra.co.nz
Church of Christ, cnr. Stafford & Sale Sts., 7:30pm start
Home educating through

Home Educators on TV

David & Jenny Waldron and family are probably the only home educators on the upcoming TV series, "Babies", about how newborns affect families. It is ten episodes, one family featuring each week on TV3, Thursdays starting 21 June 2001 at 8:00 p.m.

Says Jenny, "We should be episode 5 on 19 July 2001. Of course, all this is subject to change. As far as we know, ours is the only homebirth as well. It was a great experience for our family. The majority of the filming took place when I was 8 months pregnant, having the baby (very discreet I'm assured!) and about 6 weeks after."

David & Jenny Waldron, Naomi, Zipporah, Elijah, Josiah, Vashti and (of course, the star of the show) Isaac live in Tokomaru.

secondary and preparing for tertiary education Bring your youth with you for Q & A Session

Thu June 21 stay with Barbara's brother & family in Wanaka

Sat June 23 Invercargill

Contact Liz, ph. (03) 248-5084
Invercargill Christian Centre, 165 Leet Street
9:30am-5:00pm and 6:30-8:00pm
Cost \$10.00 per family or \$3.00 per session. Tea and coffee provided, bring your own lunch.
Topics to be covered during the day:
-How to deal with burnout
-Dealing with the pressures of home (schooling) educating
-Making the most of preschoolers
-Preparing for ERO visits
-Parent/teenage panel
-Getting into tertiary education and the workforce
The evening meeting will be The Fathers Role and a Vision for the Future.

Mon June 25 Dunedin Christian Home Schoolers

Elim Church, Harrow Street
Contact Yolanda, (03) 477-3039 roland.storm@clear.net.nz or Jan, ph. (03) 474-0454
\$5.00 per family
\$10.00 for the children's programme per family, plus a collection for travel expenses.
9:00-9:30 registration
9:30-11:00 Session one - "Education for Life"
- getting started each day (help for the procrastinator).
- remembering your God, have you made time for Him.
- balancing demands of house management and teaching.
- keeping a right balance of serving husbands and loving children.
- time for mum, personal time.
11:00-11.30 morning tea
11:30-12:30 "Learning Styles" - taken by Yolanda Storm
12:30-1:30 lunch
(Optional 30min. presentation on Getting Started during lunch.)
1:30-3:00 Session two - "Home Educating our Youth"

- keeping our youth happy at home
- contact with others the same age
- special challenges for our youth
- what about qualifications?
- looking beyond the home education years
- some success stories
7:30-9:00 "Vision for the future, encouragement for the Dads"

Wed June 27 Oamaru

7:30pm Contact Wendy, (03) 434-9107, flyfish@clear.net.nz.

Thu June 28 Ashburton

Pot providence tea and meeting.
Contact Helen, ph. (03) 303-6259 phtar@ihug.co.nz

Fri-Sat Jun 29-30 Christchurch

Contact Jill, ph. (03) 352-7554 hanna@xtra.co.nz or Sandra ph. (03) 358-5706
Homeschooling through secondary and preparing for tertiary education and the workforce.
Bring your youth with you for Q & A Session

Mon July 02 Timaru

7:30pm at St Phillips and All Saints Anglican Church Hall, Luxmore Road.
Contact Hilary, ph. (03) 688-3604 ross@waughconsult.co.nz

Tue July 03 McKenzie Country with Barbara's sister.

Thu Jul 5 Waipara, Nth Cant'y

7:30pm evening meeting.
Contact Jenny, ph. (03) 314-6740

Fri July 06 Blenheim

Robyn Thwaites, ph. 578-5036 thwaiting@xtra.co.nz
7:00pm registration, 7:30pm start
Community House, Budge Street.
Topic: Home educating through secondary and preparing for tertiary education and the workforce followed by The Fathers Role and the Vision for the Future.

Sat July 08 Picton to Wellington