Grant and Workshop Issues and Opportunities for K-16 Educators: Sharing Information and Building Community: Education and the Internet

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The Berglund Center for Internet Studies was founded with the mission to facilitate discussion, research, debate, and writing concerning the impact of the Internet within our global society and economy. With that charge, this column will be a forum for the discussion of issues related to grants and workshops for k-16 educators. Specifically, it will be a welcome place for a wide range of articles concerned with education, community, and values related to grant and workshop opportunities. Some articles might take on issues like private funding for public education while other articles might direct readers to electronic resources that provide information on workshops and grants appropriate to their funding needs.

Since this is the first column, it seems important to discuss some of the broad issues and ideas that are central to the interaction between educators and the Internet. In essence explaining why this column has a valuable place in this journal. There is little doubt that the impact of the Internet on educators has been profound. Some educators embrace it as sacred; some hold it with uncertainty, and others disdain it with passion. Whatever their posture, educators know the Internet has changed the way students, teachers and administrators do their work.

The original developers and users of the Internet had the spirit of educators. The Internet’s absence of censorship and a centralized control structure was the digital parallel to the academic freedom that educators held sacred. Educators at all levels now had access to a network designed with them in mind. Scientific data, business reports, and poetry traveled the with equal
rights. Some communities, notably business people, saw this as a revolution, while other communities, notably teachers, saw this as evolution. This was not a new idea among educators. To them the Internet was the logical evolution of information exchange. While the dot com domain has given consumers access to a wide range of products and businesses access to a wide range of consumers, the dot edu domain has provided educators with free access to information and communication tools to support learning.

In addition to the free exchange of information, another benefit of the Internet has been the development of electronic communities that have been built, developed, and sustained by the community members themselves. With the development of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, the Internet has expanded the idea of community. Early educational electronic communities were confined to members who were willing to learn the command code necessary for navigation and membership. Now with the advent of user friendly interfaces, elementary school children use communication tools with ease.

One of the most useful characteristics of the Internet is the access it has given educators to pursue grant and workshop funding. In some ways the Internet has created the need to perpetuate itself, a useful evolutionary characteristic. Educators are increasingly looking for funding sources that will allow them to purchase hardware, software, and training to develop their projects that involve integrating technology into their curriculum. To support this effort, industry, government agencies, and philanthropists have created competitive grants designed to fund efforts that support technology-based efforts in schools. The most publicly touted and far reaching effort has been to connect all schools to the Internet. Some educators aren’t sure what they are going to do with their new found access to the world, but somehow they know it’s important to be connected.

In the spirit of sharing information, building community, and evolution, I’d like to tell you about a web site that would be a nice portal for educators interested in grants and workshops. Google [1] has created a directory that has a category specifically for educators seeking funding. The web sites that are listed represent a cross section of sponsors and themes. The organizations offering grants range from the U.S. Department of Education [2], which provides funding for multimillion dollar projects, to the Toshiba America Foundation, a not for profit organization that provides cash grants to teachers for improving their math and science instruction. In addition to these sites there are a number of sites designed to help educators with the grant writing process. Teacher Grants [3] is a web site which helps teachers learn how to apply for grants from private sources. In addition, they describe the range and kinds of grants available. And for those educators who would rather hire someone to write their grant for them, Education System Planning [4] will do it for a fee. They specialize in planning projects and securing funding.

What makes this Google directory unique is that it is the largest human edited directory on the web. As the pace of development on the web increases, automated search engines can’t keep up. As Google puts it “Instead of fighting the explosive growth of the Internet, the Open Directory provides the means for the Internet to organize itself. As the Internet grows, so do the number of
net-citizens. These citizens can each organize a small portion of the web and present it back to the rest of the population, culling out the bad and useless and keeping only the best content.” [5]

This seems to be a fitting site for the first column. As the Internet grows, there is a certain irony to human editors searching and sorting all that information. So, I trust those net-citizens who are educators and editors will feel comfortable in their role. After all, they understand sharing information and building community.

References:


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ONE THOUGHT ON “GRANT AND WORKSHOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR K-16 EDUCATORS: SHARING INFORMATION AND BUILDING COMMUNITY: EDUCATION AND THE INTERNET”

Zulema Schrimsher

on January 30, 2014 at 6:12 PM said:

Wow! This can be one particular of the most helpful blogs we have ever arrive across on this subject. Actually Wonderful. I am also an expert in this topic therefore I can understand your effort.