

TIPS News



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT STATEWIDE

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Tuning In To the CCCSAT Network

CCCSAT Engineering

The California Community College Satellite Network (CCCSAT) delivery system is designed to be reliable, simple to operate, and maintenance free. CCCSAT's satellite downlink system has no moving mechanical parts, is always tuned to the correct satellite and transponder, and is designed for operation by staff without specialized technical training. It is

meant to be a "satellite appliance," as easy to use as a toaster.

The CCCSAT engineers have completed research that, after many years of satellite uplink and downlink experience, has revealed that the weakest link



The CCCSAT team works on the uplink equipment at Palomar College

in receiving satellite programming is pointing the dish at the correct satellite. When a general-purpose, movable satellite dish (usually 10 to 15 feet in diameter) is used to receive satellite programming, it must be re-positioned to a new satellite each time a different program source is desired. The mechanics of these low cost (less than \$15,000) downlink antennas cannot repeatedly

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Online Course Hosting

Does your college have courses online yet?

In an effort to facilitate online course development by California Community Colleges, the Chancellor's Office is pleased to announce a statewide online course-hosting plan that is available to all community colleges for the 2000-2001 school year. This plan has been developed by and is operated through the coordinated efforts of the five California Virtual Campus Centers (CVC).

Intended to support colleges in their online startup efforts, the hosting services program provides the following opportunities to California Community Colleges for one year:

- Participation in the CVC WebCT or Blackboard license at no charge for a fixed number of user accounts.
- Scalable WebCT and Blackboard licenses that enable colleges to purchase additional user accounts, or unlimited licenses at heavily discounted rates.
- Free online course hosting on a WebCT or Blackboard server, provided by the CVCs.
- Free support for faculty using WebCT and Blackboard as part of the hosting program.
- Free license to all colleges for the use of an online, interactive survey tool, to assist in measuring course quality, as well as collecting data

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online



HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE USING THE NET

Association For Interactive Media

A new joint study by Greenfield Online and YouthStream Media Networks confirms the Internet has become an integral element of college life. In fact, the 120-page study of 1,135 students, drawn from an online research panel of 30,000 four-year-college students, shows that nearly a third of students (31 percent) describe themselves as "Internet dependent" and more than a quarter (28 percent) consider themselves "cybergeeks." The vast majority of students (81 percent) have made at least one online purchase. This number has increased significantly since November 1998 (51 percent). The most common items purchased are CDs (64 percent), books (58 percent), clothing (42 percent) and concert/ theater/ event tickets (32 percent).

A quarter of college students have purchased textbooks online. Those students who buy textbooks online describe the

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U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE SAYS CURRENT LAW RESTRAINS DISTANCE EDUCATION

Chronicle of Higher Education

The head of the U.S. Copyright Office told a congressional commission recently that current copyright law inhibits the growth of online education. But the president of a publishers' group retorted that changing the law could hurt copyright holders' ability to maintain control of their works.

Marybeth Peters, the U.S. registrar of copyrights, said that the provision for "fair use" should be expanded so that any copyrighted materials that can be used freely in classrooms can also be used online for distance-education courses.

But Patricia Schroeder, who is president of the Association of American Publishers and is a former Democratic U.S. representative from Colorado, said Congress needs to be careful of how far it loosens the copyright restrictions, or authors may be hurt in the process.

The commission, known as the Congressional Web-based Education Commission, is made up of members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate and representatives of higher-education institutions and organizations. Its members heard

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Register Now For CVC 2000

The California Virtual Campus Annual Conference, "CVC 2000: Online Learning & Higher Education," will provide an exceptional opportunity for you to meet and share information and experiences with over 300 of your colleagues in the forefront of online learning in higher education. The conference will be held at The Resort at Squaw Creek located in Olympic Valley, Lake Tahoe, California, on October 22-24, 2000.

This year's conference program places particular focus on topics of interest to professionals in the 107 California community colleges.

Program Tracks include the Planning and Policy Track, for college decision-makers; the Teaching and Learning Track, for anyone who is teaching online, and developing online courses; and the Support Service and Training

Track, for staff and faculty from student support and professional development related to distance learning.

The keynote address, "The Orbital Shift in Education," will be delivered by Dr. Mary Beth Susman, CEO of Kentucky Virtual University, well-known national speaker on distance education, and a Smithsonian Laureate.

"Virtual Administration of a Virtual College," a panel discussion by college presidents on the pitfalls and opportunities of online education programs, will address how online learning impacts the college mission, how to support faculty and fulfill student needs, the lessons learned so far, and a look at the




CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS

future of distance education.

The conference will also include the presentation of the CVC Online Teaching Award of \$2,500 recognizing an exceptional online teaching Web site at a California community college. The prize is sponsored by Pearson Education.

Hotel space is filling quickly so register and book accommodations now in order to attend this flagship event for the CVC.


Complete information, including online registration, is available at the California Virtual Campus Web site: <http://pdc.cvc.edu/conferences/> 

Microsoft Community & Technical College Advisory Council Gains Butte College Member

Congratulations to Doug Houston who was recently selected to represent Butte College on the Community & Technical College Advisory Council, a newly formed nationwide technology committee sponsored by Microsoft and the League for Innovation.

The underlying purpose for the council is to develop the two-way communication that comes with relationship building to enhance the work of Microsoft, participating educators, and the higher education community.

Doug will represent Butte College as one of sixteen council members to serve on the 2000-2002 advisory council chosen from a field of 120 nominations. Doug was the only California Community College member selected to participate on the council. Each nominee was carefully considered with attention to extending the council opportunity to individuals, schools, and geographic areas that have not previously been represented at Microsoft.

A balance of rural and urban schools, geographic distribution, and a cross section of community and technical college staff from CEO's to administrative services were sought, making the process extremely challenging. With the excellent credentials and experience of all the applicants, the selection committee faced a formidable task! 



Doug Houston, Director of Human Resources at Butte College, joins the nationwide technology council.

Tips for Building Successful Online Learning Communities With Emphasis On Using Threaded Discussions

Judith Norton

*Training & Curriculum Coordinator,
California Virtual Campus Professional Development Center*

On a recent walk through admissions at a local community college, I overheard two students discussing online classes. One student was encouraging his friend to take an online class because he enjoyed all the “talking,” the “sharing of ideas,” and involvement in learning. His friend asked, “How could this happen? I thought you just log on, get your assignments, and turn them in. Take a test occasionally. But, ‘talking,’ are you sure? You mean, it’s not like a correspondence course?”

Fortunately the first student had experienced an online class that was a model of this type of delivery that is occurring all over the state and across the country. These courses use various means of communication to create an interactive learning community.

There are two different forms of communication that can take place in an online class: asynchronous, as in threaded discussions and listservs; and synchronous, as in the use of chat and instant messaging systems (IMS).

To further explore what students believe contribute the most to foster learning communities, the students of the CSU-Hayward History and Culture of Online Learning Communities class were recently asked this very question: What is your opinion about the development of learning communities using the following technologies most widely available today?

For the discussion, emphasis was placed on forms of asynchronous communication (threaded discussions and listservs), and synchronous communication (chat and instant messaging systems). Students were asked to comment on which system helped them to develop a sense of community. What follows is a summary of their response.

Asynchronous Forms of Communication

Threaded Discussions

Some very intense learning communities have developed simply by using threaded discussions. While they can become long in a class that is large (over 20), threaded discussions are the most valuable because they fit the anytime, anywhere model best. They allow the facilitator to find out whether students are truly understanding and thinking beyond the material, while students have time to thoughtfully discuss topics and correct spelling and grammar errors as

they contribute to the thread. A connection takes place, ideas are generated, and there is a great potential for problem solving; students get a chance to contribute when they are ready.

Listservs

Students felt listservs were good but not as manageable as the threaded discussions where you can see the threads all at once. These were good research tools and great for continuing the sense of community after the course is over and for posting bulletins that need to be attended to immediately.

Synchronous Forms of Communication

Chat

Chat sessions can provide a good format for questions and answers, group work, and office hours.

Instant Messaging System (IMS)

An IMS provides an extra sense of community that is crucial for community-college students. It is also good for online office hours, but can be confusing if there are more than three or four people contributing at once. (This is generally not a problem for office hours).

An IMS also allows for a wonderful sub-community tool and is invaluable in the coordination, discussion, and implementation of group projects. It requires on-your-toes talking. Students find themselves completely focused and thinking top notch during the time.

Focus on the Use of Threaded Discussions

How do they work? Can they work for your class? These are questions asked by professors as they design or work with instructional designers to create online communities. Some strategies to consider and citations for additional information:

- *Create An Ambience* (Kimball, McGrath). During the initial threaded posting for the class, the instructor can establish the tone for the discussion. Be it formal or informal, the instructor will give the lead for the type of interaction to take place. The author always refers to herself in the initial posting as the facilitator. In that way, the students understand that they are equal members of the learning process. They become more proactive

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learners, and they start to understand the balance of power between teacher and student.


- *Require Participation* (Klemm). Clarify in the beginning that student participation is a part of the class. It is wise to quantify participation. For example, 20 percent of the grade may be class participation. It is not recommended that you give a grade for participation each week, but do give a participation grade at the end of the course. Students will become actively engaged and take great care in their assignments when they know others will learn and read as well.
- *Make Activity Interesting* (Klemm). Rather than simply posting questions, vary the activities over the course, especially for the average 15 or 18 week courses at most community colleges. Have students form research teams, or become consultants by reviewing another student's papers.
- *Recap By Reweaving* (Kimball). It is important that students comprehend the general concept discussed in the postings for the unit. Quite often, the author has recapped the general points of the unit after the unit has closed. If more discussion is appropriate, another question is posted. On occasion, students may be allowed to summarize the postings for the unit as a means of extra credit or to make up for non-participation over a period of time.
- *Understand Your Limitations*. The optimum size for quality online discussions is 15 or 20. Most community college classes are somewhat larger, with the author working with one class of 180 students. With numbers varying greatly, try some of the following activities:
 - Break larger groups into smaller groups by interest or by some other method that is agreeable to the majority. Have groups discuss the topic, and post a synopsis of the threaded information.
 - Have students form groups and engage in a collaborative effort to research a topic. They may use email, threaded discussion, chat, or instant messaging systems to coordinate their efforts. Quite often the students do not relish collaborative projects, but it is

good training for the types of activities they will all face in the work place.

- *Conduct Online Scavenger Hunts*. Students look forward to this and work diligently for the prize. Either have students work in groups, or give the prize to the first 5 students to submit the correct answers. The prize? A coupon for a Starbucks beverage or a Baskin & Robbins ice cream. Both have proved to be quite popular.

The most exciting thing about online learning communities is that all students start from a level playing field. There are no pre-conceived ideas of who will do well ...

- *Online debate*. A little more difficult to coordinate, but nonetheless fun for all participants. A group takes on a topic giving all the pros or cons. The class decides who wins the debate.
- *Use Media To Generate A Discussion*. The author has worked with one education class that used clips of a K-12 teacher giving directions to her class. Students were then asked to evaluate the teacher's performance.

The most exciting thing about online learning communities is that all students start from a level playing field. There are no pre-conceived ideas of who will do well by the way they dress, the way they look, or what car they drive. Students learn to respect their fellow learners by the contribution they make to the general class. Students who would never speak up in a class become quite verbal and share amazing things. Join the ranks of delighted online facilitators - involve your students in an online learning community. 

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Sources, books, and an online bibliography can be found at <http://pdc.cvc.edu/newsletter/>

Asking The Right Questions

Preserving academic values in distance education

Virginia McBride

Project Director, System Think Tank

Over the last several years, external threats to the future of California’s community colleges have emerged on the academic horizon. Within the distance learning environment, these threats have agitated and, to some extent, terrified academics throughout the system. They feared the:

- loss of jobs
- loss of control over decisions affecting their performance
- loss of contact with students
- loss of degree-based education
- imposition of courses in whose development they had no voice
- usage-mandates regarding course-materials in whose creation they had not shared
- intrusion of outside businesses that were creating their own universities

True, the threats that gave rise to the fears really do exist. However, the question remains, how should the community colleges deal with the threats and fears? The answer lies in quality assurance, an assurance in which accrediting bodies play a major role.

Judith S. Eaton, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, in her article entitled “Core Academic Values Quality, and Regional Accreditation: The Challenge of Distance Learning” explores the problem in a very thoughtful and level-headed manner.

To each of six core academic values, she attaches a distance-learning-related challenge to that value. These values, and their related challenges are:

Value	Challenged By
(1) Institutional autonomy	Consortial arrangements
(2) Collegial and shared governance	Dispersion of faculty and students
(3) Intellectual and academic authority of faculty	Commercial courseware, standardized courses, part-time faculty, disaggregation of faculty responsibilities
(4) The degree	Competition from credentials: reduced domination of degree-granting
(5) General education	Pervasiveness of training
(6) Site-based education	The diminishing importance of place

After addressing each of the six core values and their respective challenges, Ms. Eaton explores the question of ‘appropriate regional accreditation responses to the challenges.’ She proposes a transition “framework for rethinking values and accreditation standards” which has four principles as a foundation:

- Maintaining the core values is important to higher education
- The purpose of each core value should govern our response to change
- Distance learning is a change worth accommodating
- Defining and enhancing the intersection of core academic values and distance learning can be a key strategy for meeting distance learning challenges.

Ms. Eaton contends that these principles are useful for “review of programs and degrees that rely heavily on a combination of technology-based and site-based education experiences.” Within this framework, she identifies each of the six core values, its associated purpose, its related challenge, and the possible strategy for the future.

Beyond the transitional framework, Ms. Eaton sees the need for “recalibrating traditional capacity and process standards of accreditation.” In this recalibrating, she sees the need to “develop standards that address consequences: outcomes, results, and competencies.” She closes her article by admonishing, “We will not lose those values if we ask the right questions about their preservation.” The biggest question, then, is what questions need to be asked to assure quality. Answers to those very questions reduce the fears and eliminate the threats.

These questions need to be shaped, discussed, and answered with major input from practitioners in the distance learning area especially from those who have taught, as well as taken, distance learning courses. Ms. Eaton has established a structure for the discussion: the six core values. Who then has a question? **!**

Virginia McBride would welcome your questions, sent via email to vmcbride@ix.netcom.com.

Copyright

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testimony on Wednesday as the commission ended its fourth meeting. It is scheduled to make recommendations in November on what laws Congress should change to accommodate the growth of online education.

The current copyright law was written in 1976 and limits the "fair use" of copyrighted works for educational purposes to settings in which students meet in a classroom, Ms. Peters said. The law makes it much more difficult for a professor to use a clip of a movie in an online course than in a face-to-face course, she said.

The law's "fair-use" exemptions do not extend to online education, Ms. Peters said, and the law therefore limits the growth of distance education. "Emerging markets should be able to develop with minimal government interference," she said.

The Copyright Office released a report in May 1999 that called on Congress to make the copyright law technology-neutral, so that all its provisions would apply to the Internet. But Congress has taken little action on the issue, she said.

However, Ms. Schroeder said putting copyrighted works, such as videos and sound clips, on the Internet could be dangerous. She said security measures available today don't prevent people from capturing the materials and distributing them without the authors' permission. If they lose control over their own material, she said, authors may lose the incentive to produce creative works.

Distance education, Ms. Schroeder said, seems to be thriving now and can continue to coexist with the current copyright law. "I don't think you need to change any of the laws to make this market work," she said.

Sen. Bob Kerrey, the Nebraska Democrat who is chairman of the commission, said after the meeting that the recommendations made in the copyright report last year and reiterated by Ms. Peters should be studied so that the law can be updated. He said he hoped that the Copyright Office and publishers could reach a compromise on rewording the law.

"Some kind of exemptions need to be provided," Senator Kerrey said. "There clearly is an access problem."

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Online Course Hosting

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regarding online course development.

- Ongoing training opportunities for faculty throughout 2000-2001 in the use of both WebCT and Blackboard provided by the Regional Centers and the Professional Development Center.
- Access to a WebCT and Blackboard development server for course development and for training.

The CVC program was made available to host online courses and development by the beginning of the Fall 2000 semester. ■

For more information, please visit the CVC Web site:
<http://www.cvc.edu>

Students Using the Net

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process as "inexpensive" (77 percent), "more convenient" (49 percent) and "easier" (42 percent). Ten percent also like the sites' guaranteed book buy-back.

Nearly all the students surveyed (92 percent) own a computer. The majority of students (78 percent) have been using the Internet for at least three years, and 90 percent go online at least once a day. They spend an average of three hours online every day, and 20 percent spend four or more hours online each day. The most common regular online activity is sending and receiving e-mail (92 percent). Other frequent online activities include surfing the Internet for topics of interest (72 percent) and using instant messaging (60 percent).

For more information contact: Mark Fusco at mfusco@greenfield.com, or call 203-846-5778 or 203-858-1771.

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CONTRIBUTE to TIPS *News*

TIPS News focuses on projects funded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office that involve technology in education. TIPS News also features other issues concerning distance education in California, including videoconferencing and online learning.

If you have an article suitable for publication in TIPS News or are interested in writing material for publication, contact:

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Tuning In To CCCSAT

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return to a specific satellite with precision. The problem is compounded by their large diameter and consequently narrower beam width at the higher Ku band frequencies used by CCCSAT. Any position error will degrade the signal. This means that once the movable dish "lands" on a satellite, it must be manually adjusted by an operator to "peak" the signal strength in order to receive a clear picture.

The CCCSAT satellite network has been engineered to provide broadcast quality programming using dish antennas only 1.8 meters in diameter. When these dishes are initially installed, they are set to the fixed satellite used by CCCSAT. The dishes are small enough to be mounted on almost any standard

roof surface without penetrating or otherwise damaging the roof. They are very similar to the small satellite dishes you might see on the roof of a convenience store or gas station that are used for processing credit card transactions. Because these dishes are always receiving the CCCSAT signal, there will always be CCCSAT programming coming from your DigiCipher receiver. There is no need for technical staff to fine tune the signal each time the system is to be used.

The CCCSAT engineering mission is to provide a broadband delivery system to serve all 107 California Community Colleges. Our goal is to provide a system that is technically simple, easy to operate, reliable, and inexpensive. We

will be providing the very best picture and sound possible using today's technology, but always keeping an eye to the future. **T**



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