



Hot New Items in Technology April 2006

Below I have listed several hot topics in educational technology today along with resources to find out more about each of these topics.

- **Blogs**

"Blog" is short for web log and is a form of a diary that is published on the web in an easy and immediate manner. Blogs are very easy to setup and use and provide a journal and feedback mechanism that can foster student discussions. It is recommended that teachers establish strict publishing tools or use a blog tool that provides teacher approval before publishing.

For more information about using blogs in the classroom:

<http://classblogging.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.my-ecoach.com/online/webresourcelist.php?rlid=4992>

<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/bloggingtech/index.htm>

For resources on education-related blogs:

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/internet/teaching-methods/33550.html>

<http://www.edweek.org/tm/section/blogs/index.html>

- **Podcasting**

Podcasting is a method of publishing audio files to the web and subscribing to the site where they are published so that you can retrieve them automatically and listen to them whenever you like on your computer or a portable audio player. Students are easily engaged in working with audio files and it's helpful for auditory learners.

For more information about using podcasting in the classroom:

<http://www.e-learningcentre.co.uk/eclipse/Resources/podcasting.htm>

<http://www.intelligenic.com/kidcast/>

<http://epnweb.org/>

For resources on education-related podcasts:

http://www.idiotvox.com/Education/PodCast_Review_Education_and_Technology_Today_12594.html

<http://www.apple.com/education/resources/podcastingvideos/?cid=CDM2589A-1>

- **Interactive websites**

More interactive educational websites are available now than ever before. Many of these focus on specific topics and integrate student responses and assessment. If you can find one specific to your curriculum, they can be very engaging and valuable. Some Examples:

<http://pbskids.org/lions/games/>

<http://www.edheads.org/>

- **Open Source Software**

Open Source software is available for free and is supported by a network of people who openly share information. It provides a cost-effective way for schools to leverage older equipment and put computers into the hands of more teachers and students with limited budget impact.

For more information on using open source software in schools:

<http://www.netc.org/openoptions/>

- **Video Streaming**

Subscriptions to online resources that provide education videos for downloading are becoming increasingly popular with teachers who can quickly locate videos that pertain directly to their curriculum. Many of these videos are 10-20 minutes and engage students and fit into the classroom experience. See examples at:

<http://www.unitedstreaming.com>

<http://www.iwasabducted.com/nasavideos.htm>

- **Parent Portals**

Parent portals are web pages that schools are using to communicate directly with parents, oftentimes with information specific to their children. Many of these software portals provide assignments, grades, attendance, discipline, lunch fees, menus and purchases, email communications and other school information that informs parents what is going on at school and how their students are performing. See examples:

http://redikersoftware.com/Edline/Edline_web_center.htm

http://www.chancery.com/corporate/newsroom/pr/releases/00/062600_onlinefund.htm

- **Wikis**

A wiki is a type of website that allows anyone visiting the site to add, to remove, or otherwise to edit all content, very quickly and easily, sometimes without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative writing. The most popular wiki is Wikipedia.com which is an online encyclopedia that has been built by the public in the last few years. Wiki tools are available as software or within some course tools and can foster students

recording, building on, and collaborating research.

- **GPS/GIS & Google Maps**

Google maps are photographic images linked to mapping software. In the classroom you can visually examine landforms, buildings, cities and infrastructure. The interactive nature engages students. GPS/GIS tools and classroom resources are becoming increasingly popular. For more information:

<http://maps.google.com/>

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/resources/reports/gis/index.cfm>

- **RSS**

RSS is a method used to communicate news or updates of web pages to subscribers that use a news or rss aggregator program. Schools can use it to update parents and community and teachers can use it to bring current events into the classroom on specific topics. For more information:

<http://www.npr.org/rss/>

- **Video Conferencing**

Faster internet access and lower equipment costs have brought viable video conferencing into more classrooms. Schools can offer expanded resources and link students who are physically unable to attend school the opportunities to visit their classrooms. For more information:

<http://www.netc.org/digitalbridges/vc/>

<http://www.d261.k12.id.us/VCing/>