



ADVANCING LEARNING: THIS IS IT!

May \ 20, 21, 22 \ 2009

Advancing Learning: This is IT! 2009, hosted by George Brown College is shaping up to be quite an event with fantastic keynote addresses, excellent presentations & workshops, as well as plenty of opportunity for networking and fun. This year's conference continues with the general theme of "Advancing Learning" that was introduced last year at Mohawk College. This is one of the best avenues for high quality professional development and networking with those who live teaching and learning everyday. It is your opportunity to learn from practicing educators about such diverse topics as the use of wikis, blogs, simulations, gaming, online communities, trends in instructional technology, and much more.



The organizing committee is very proud to announce three great keynote speakers who will not disappoint. **Diane Zorn**, will open the conference on Thursday morning by sharing her expertise using advanced Internet technologies in teaching, including role-playing, webcasting, podcasting, chat rooms, wikis and blogs. On Thursday afternoon, **Curtis J. Bonk** will use his R2D2 (Read, Reflect, Display, and Do) learning style framework for instructional design to present engaging strategies that relate to different student learning styles or preferences. On Friday, **Kelly Parke**, a media architect based in Toronto, will start the day by discussing advancements in mobile media technology that have created the possibility for learning to take place anytime or anywhere.



As usual, there will be plenty of opportunities to socialize with your colleagues at this conference. The Wednesday afternoon registration and reception will be followed by dinner at the [Mysteriously Yours](#) Dinner Theatre. The annual awards banquet on Thursday night will be held at the beautiful [Metropolitan Ballroom at Atlantis Pavilions](#), Ontario Place; a magnificent complex overlooking Lake Ontario. Lucy Izon, an award-winning Toronto Travel Writer and Journalist, will lead those attending the banquet through a fun and fascinating virtual tour of Toronto while providing an opportunity to win some great prizes.

More detailed conference information and online registration is available at:

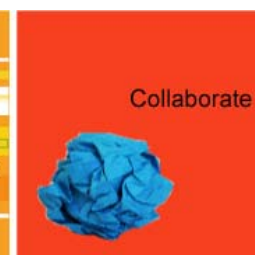
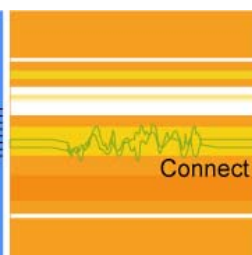
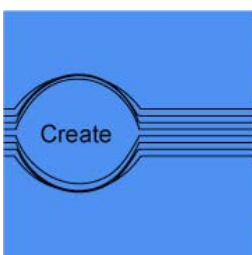
<http://liad.georgebrown.ca/thisisit/>

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Your 2009 ETC Reps

- **Algonquin** - Gail Allan
- **Boreal** - Renee Hallee
- **Cambrian** - Cora Vandendriesche
- **Canadore** - Joan Perron
- **Centennial** - Michael Evans
- **Conestoga** - Elizabeth Bowman
- **Confederation** - Miriam Wall
- **Durham** - Chris Hinton
- **Fanshawe** - Lisa Young
- **Fleming** - Trish O'Connor
- **George Brown** - Shirley Lesch
- **Georgian** - Bob Marchessault
- **Humber** - Ruth Hickey
- **La Cite** - Nicole Lacelle
- **Lambton** - Lori Duquette
- **Loyalist** - Jennifer Bryan
- **Mohawk** - Pat Anderchek
- **Niagara** - Colin Fraser
- **Northern** - John Collins
- **Sault** - Peggy Storey
- **Seneca** - Dawn Mercer
- **Sheridan** - Sandra Hodder (Chair)
- **St. Clair** - TBD
- **St. Lawrence** - Janet Robertson



Tech Tips and Tricks: Resizing Images

provided by Colin Fraser, Coordinator of Mathematics, Niagara College

The easiest way to reduce the size of image files before uploading them to the web or emailing them is by using the Microsoft XP Power Toy called Image Resizer. Once this application has been installed on your computer, whenever you right-click on image file icons, the short-cut menu that appears has a new option: Resize Pictures. By selecting this option you can quickly have images reduced to Small, Medium, Large or other custom sizes. By default, the original images remain and the smaller images have "(Small)", "(Medium)", or "(Large)" appended to the original file name, depending on what you selected.

To access this tool, go to

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/Downloads/powertoys/Xppowertoys.mspx>.

Scroll down until you find the **Image Resizer**. While you're there, you will see other useful 'toys'.



Faculty Flipping for Flip Cameras by Susan Pratten and Trish Delaney, Faculty, Sheridan College



Sheridan faculty from a diverse range of programs - Visual and Creative Arts, Social Service Worker, Nursing, Community Worker, and Gerontology - have been using "Flip" camcorders to create video clips for both in class and out of class learning. The videos can be emailed, published online or saved to a CD. It could not be easier to use! The camera records

up to sixty minutes of material; inserts directly to your computer through USB, no cords needed; has built-in software, 2X digital zoom and a tri-pod mount. It works best for 1:1 or small group interactions, not whole class due to background noise.

In various counselling courses students tape their role plays and get instant feedback on body language and interviewing skills. Nursing students watch a teacher-created demo on specific skills and compare their work to the demo. The demos are made available to teachers of multiple sections. One of the sculpting teachers has received a very positive response from students whose work she critiques on the flip. She has also taped demonstrations that she intends to post online for students to view. She plans to save the student work and her demos as samples for next year. The Social Service Worker Program uses it to tape field practicum liaisons describing various career options.

After a recent presentation at Sheridan's PD Day numerous ideas were generated for more creative uses of the Flip. The Career Centre will use it to promote career options and Student Services plans to create short 'tips' on frequently requested topics e.g. avoiding procrastination; study skills.



Reasonably priced and fun! Learn more at

<http://www.theflip.com/>



News Alert:

Lisa Buyer, ABC News Consumer Product reviewer says: "While Instamatic and disposable cameras led to changes in how we frame what we see, inexpensive pocket video cams, and the ease with which mere technology mortals can now share simply made video, could revolutionize fields ranging from entertainment to education, reporting to communication." Full review available at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/GadgetGuide/story?id=4010603&page=1>



Did you know....

"IT" in Advancing Learning: This is IT! 2009 refers to **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY?**

Attend the Conference and learn more about the provincial Educational Technology Committee.





Check IT out!!

Web resources that you can explore at your leisure.

EndNote! - An easy way to prepare bibliographies and organize references.

Check it out at: <http://www.endnote.com/eninfo.asp>

Dimdim is a free interactive web conferencing service with no download required to host or attend meetings.

Check it out at: http://www.dimdim.com/products/what_is_dimdim.html

JING is free software that allows you to do Screen Captures, Screencasting and allows for instant sharing.

Check it out at: http://www.dimdim.com/products/what_is_dimdim.html

Want to contribute?

If you know about an interesting Instructional Technology tool or application and want to share it with your colleagues, then send your link with a brief description as to why you think it is helpful to Ruth.Hickey@humber.ca and we will include in the next HotSpot newsletter.



Does Twitter Have Potential as an Educational Tool? by Jordanne Christie, Learning Technologies Specialist, Durham College

There has been quite a bit of discussion lately on the educational blogs that I frequent, about the use of Twitter as an educational tool. I personally, hadn't considered it as anything more than a fun application for keeping in touch with friends, however after reading some of the ideas of others, I find myself pondering the potential of Twitter in an educational setting.

What is Twitter? Twitter is a free "micro-blogging" service that allows users to post brief updates about their everyday thoughts and activities to the Web via their browser, cell phone, or IM tool. Users only have 140 characters for each posting (or "tweet") so they have to be brief. These updates are displayed on a timeline page, which show all tweets in reverse chronological order. They are also instantly delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Users can receive updates via the Twitter website, instant messaging, SMS, RSS, or email. Users can limit who sees the messages to people they've explicitly added to their friends list, or they can make the messages public. Users can also send private messages to friends or post a direct reply to another tweet. Often a tweet describes what an individual is doing, however tweets can include anything from responses to other tweets, questions to your twitter network, links to interesting resources etc. Most individual tweets are trivial, but cumulatively they can allow users to really get to know each other quite well.

Resources for this article:

<http://twitter.com/>

<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7027.pdf>

<http://www.danieldura.com/code/twittercamp/>

How are Educators Experimenting with Twitter? According to an article by Educause, one of the benefits of Twitter is that the character limit forces users to be brief and to the point, which is an important skill in thinking clearly and communicating effectively. Thus, it is believed that Twitter could be a viable platform for fostering metacognition skills. In addition, other educators have identified the following possible applications for Twitter in the classroom:

- Twitter could be used as a replacement for ARS (audience response systems). Students could use their cell phones or computers instead of clickers to send "tweets" to questions posed in class.
- During a lecture for example, students could tweet their questions, concerns, thoughts and ideas, and everyone in class would be able to see them, making the entire classes thoughts transparent.
- Twitter could be used by instructors to send students short reminders of important dates or teasers for upcoming classes.
- Twitter could be used as the platform for a homework assignment, where students would have to tweet an answer to the instructor using only 140 characters.

What's the Verdict? I think it would be fair to say that, at the moment, the jury is still out on whether Twitter is a useful Educational tool or not. I suspect that the answer is that it could be useful in certain circumstances. Although not every assignment will be able to conform to the 140 character limit, I think that Twitter is an interesting tool that should be further explored and experimented with in the classroom.



How Google Sites Works by Bob Marchessault, Instructional Designer, Georgian College

Web sites can cost money to host and the software can be expensive. This has limited the ability to assign students the task of making a web site as part of their course work. Google Sites is an online service that overcomes these concerns by making disk space on the Web available for **free** and provides no cost web site design tools for users.

Anyone can create an account at www.google.ca. Once an account is created users can sign up for a free web site from Google Sites. With 100 megabytes available most students will have enough disk space to build a project that should satisfy any course requirements.

Creation is simple and easy. Users may choose from a variety of pre-built templates that overcome the need to be a designer or programmer. Google sites provides for single-click page creation requiring no HTML skills, a customizable look and feel, plus settings for accessing and sharing information with just a few people or the whole world. Users can allow for collaboration with friends or colleagues in the construction of the web site.

Once the site is created it has a home on the Web with a unique address (e.g. <https://sites.google.com/site/joestudent/>). Google Sites is integrated with other Google products, so students can insert videos, docs, spreadsheets, presentations, photo slide shows, and calendars directly onto their Google Sites pages.

Updating content over time, changing the design and navigation, and deleting the site is easily done using the settings feature. Students who regularly use Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or similar things will find Google sites intuitive; as well, there are good help files and tutorials to get users started.

Assignment Ideas for Teachers

Key to a successful web site assignment in any course is clearly linking the activity to specific course objectives. Consider the tasks required and how these engage students, leading them towards good work. Clearly define and communicate the criteria you expect students to meet for each task or element of the project, and present this information in the form of a grading rubric. Below are some examples of possible assignments.



- ☞ Replace a major paper based report with a web site that presents the same information. Require students to link to their data sources and to other related or supportive web sites.
- ☞ Ask students to build a web site that tells a story over a specific number of pages.
- ☞ Assign students the task of creating a web site that will change people's attitude about something or some issue that is topical.
- ☞ Ask students to create a web site that markets or sells/promotes some thing, idea, place, etc.
- ☞ Have students build a portal site that acts as an information hub on a specific topic.

For more information about Google Sites visit:
<https://sites.google.com/>

Accessibility: What Can I Do To Help? By Dawn Marie Warren, Multimedia Technologist, Humber College



It is important for today's faculty to have a basic understanding of the need to ensure accessibility when creating electronic content, using MS Office programs such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel as well as Acrobat PDF files, for any academic purpose. This is the goal of the our presentation during the Advancing Learning: This is IT! 2009 conference.

Whether you are creating visuals such as PowerPoint slides, or posting handouts and assignments on the web, the session will provide tips and suggestions for creating instructional documents that can be used in the electronic classroom and easily taken to the online environment and still be accessible to all.

During the session we will demonstrate common problems students can have when accessing materials created without awareness of accessibility issues and talk about easy ways to remedy these problems. We will also discuss some of the electronic tools a student with special needs can use to access course material. The session will provide insight into potential accessibility challenges within in Learning Management Systems (such as Blackboard) that are used more frequently by faculty to support in-class courses.

There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions or share stories about accessibility issues associated with creating learning materials. In particular, the session will focus on ways you can create learning materials that are both attractive and accessible to EVERY student. Useful take-aways from this session will include handy checklists, resources, and examples. **See you at conference!!**

