

Faculty Insider—*The New World We Live In*

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People from all walks of life have blogs these days – kids, moms, teachers, engineers, and even politicians. And, while most blogging probably takes place from a personal place, like home, many professionals are now seeing great benefits to using blogs and wikis in the workplace.

Blogs are similar to online journals; typically a single author, a chronological organization, external links, and often containing comment areas to which others can post messages. A wiki is a Web-based site that allows many different authors to edit, delete, or modify the content on the posting. One of the most well known wiki is Wikipedia.com, an online editable encyclopedia.

With a new generation of workers entering the workforce, Web-based technologies and tools are also taking their place in the workplace. Because the use of technology will only increase as time goes on, it is important that we teach our students the skills they not only need to safely participate socially in an online world, but those skills that they will need to succeed in the 21st century workplace.

Wikis are great for collaboration between multiple contributors across workgroups, departments or



entire companies, with each contributor bringing specific expertise and opinions that can contribute to both individual and corporate growth and success. The wikis provide easy access to information, documents, discussions, and projects from a central location and are beneficial for archiving and tracking documents and workflow.

Blogs are getting a lot of attention these days and the potential for a worldwide readership is vast. Blog authors often link their blogs to other blogs becoming part of an online community of similar interest or topic. Blogs offer a medium to express thoughts and ideas, beliefs, opinions, and even upcoming events. Comment

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“Education is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire.”

~ William Butler Yeats

NAC Tracks

Have you listened to a podcast?

A: Yes

B: No

Vote here

Results from January/February NAC Tracks

Question: Do you have a blog?

Answers: Yes 50%

No 40%

What's a blog? 10%



Did You Know?


Safer Internet Day Blogathon

i-SAFE joined the worldwide events marking Safer Internet Day 2008. Safer Internet Day (SID) takes place each February as a global cause to raise awareness of e-Safety-related issues. SID is organized each year by the Insafe network, a consortium of national nodes that coordinate e-Safety awareness in Europe. i-SAFE is an associate node in the Insafe network, the only organization recognized to represent the United States.

The theme of this year's Safer Internet Day was, "Life online is what YOU make of it." Schools around the world interpreted that theme to original posters, flyers, comic strips, post cards, or other works and entered them in the worldwide competition. The winning projects are posted on the InSafe Web site at: <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/sid.htm>.


i-SAFE sponsored the U.S. entrant from Athens-Chilesburg Elementary school in Lexington, Kentucky. The students are part of Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP). Additionally, i-SAFE took part and posted a blog for another Safer Internet Day activity, the



Blogathon. For 24 hours educators, students and citizens from around the globe posted to the Blogathon on a variety of e-Safety topics. 

Web Site Promotes Plastic Surgery and Diet Pills

Miss Bimbo, an online Internet game, is being targeted to girls 9 to 16 in which they can earn "bimbo dollars" to purchase breast implants, other plastic surgeries and diet pills. The Web site was initially introduced in France and then promoted in Britain. Parents have expressed outrage and concern. The medical community has also drawn issue with the site due to the increasing number of teenagers undergoing breast enlargement procedures.

Anorexia groups believe the site further encourages young girls who are already vulnerable to developing eating disorders. Nicholas Jacquart set up the site and suggests that the game is harmless. The question remains—will the majority of the young girls playing this game interpret the information in a way that compromises their self image, or are they capable of seeing it as an ironic poke at today's culture? 

Site Spotlight

This month's education site spotlight is <http://educational.blogs.com>. "Educational Blogs" is really a blog about blogs. This blogger visits and reviews blogs, maintains a list of blogs by topic, and more. Get connected with other educators, keep up to date on interesting topics, and more by checking out the blogs on this site today. 





Creativity Comes to Classrooms

Acknowledging that good ideas and inventions can come from anybody at any time, i-SAFE and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) collaborated to develop dynamic curriculum that inspires students to create, at the same time teaching students how they can protect their work. Interactive and age-appropriate for upper elementary, middle and high school students, the lesson plans and activities are unique and innovative teaching tools designed to both empower students through creative-thinking exercises while engaging them to learn about patents, trademarks, copyright, and trade secrets.


In addition, the newly developed i-©@ea™ curriculum is a valuable resource for teachers to introduce students to creative problem solving. The lessons on brainstorming, for example, show students how to best present their own ideas, and how to judge the merits of any idea. Further, the i-©@ea™ materials provide inspirational true stories from youthful inventors as well as practical hands-on approaches to help students easily perform a patent and trademark search.

Even if a student is not planning on becoming an inventor, these lessons convey 2 important concepts. First, they show students that their ideas have value. Then, teaching students about intellectual property protections may give them the spark to bring those ideas out. The curriculum gives students a creative outlet.

While there have been laws protecting intellectual property in the U.S. dating back to the Constitution, the Internet has given rise to a set of modern issues.



“Students are comfortable accessing the Internet to do everything from homework assignments, to shopping, and socializing online. Teens don’t think twice about routinely posting original songs, pictures or artwork, and poems on their personal Web sites,” says Teri Schroeder, i-SAFE CEO and Program Director. “Along with their unlimited Internet access comes responsibility. The i-©@ea™ lessons and activities give students a comprehensive understanding about intellectual property issues so they can be responsible online citizens, as well as to be empowered to guard their intellectual property against possible online scammers, theft and fraud.”

The i-©@ea™ lessons/activities are part of the i-SAFE Intellectual Property curriculum for grades 4-12. It is provided to i-SAFE trained educators who fill out an online Implementation Plan. 

Making the Internet Safety Connection in Social Studies Classrooms

i-SAFE continues to look for ways to help educators make e-Safety and responsible use education an integral part of the school experience. The connections between cyber-safety issues and Social Studies are sometimes overlooked. Think about it! Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence; today’s cyber experiences are intricately woven into today’s social experiences. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the nation’s leading professional association of social

studies educators, is taking the lead in keeping educators informed about how to use and integrate technology concepts into the social studies curriculum.

Digital Age: Technology-Based K-12 Lesson Plans for Social Studies, the 105th Bulletin published by NCSS, provides a collection of thirty lesson plans for grades K-12 written by classroom teachers from around the country. These lessons build on the NCSS and NETS-S standards, and include a section on tools and techniques

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areas allow readers to respond and contribute remarks, criticism and feedback on blog entries.

There are many differing opinions about using blogs and wikis in an educational setting. While there are risks, as with any Internet application, there are benefits as well. If you are unsure of how these Web 2.0 applications may benefit you and your students, take a look at some of the ways they can be used by educators and students alike.


Wikis can provide a valuable online communication link with students and parents to view assignments, upcoming event information and resources 24 hours a day. Online collaboration between educators worldwide expands the library of knowledge and resources available to educators, such as curriculum, slide-show presentations, videos, and tutorials. Educators and students can use wikis as a space for review, study, and ongoing discussions, as well as an assignment submission area. Wikis used for projects allow contributors and instructors to track project history and group participation; the online accessibility allows students to work together from home during non-school hours. Wikis also encourage community building with their ability to hyperlink to other wikis or webpages with common topical threads of interest.

Determining the accuracy and authenticity of information is an important skill. And we all know how important it is to teach students how to avoid plagiarism and how to cite sources. Wikis offer an opportunity for educators to discuss these topics and teach students how to evaluate and cite Web sites and information. Students are the Internet generation. They love using the Internet and all of the Web 2.0 applications. We all know that students are using the Internet to socialize with others through blogs and social-networking sites. Blogging and wikis create student enthusiasm and provide places to practice reading, writing and editing skills. And, because blogs have comment features, blogging is also a great way to teach students how to constructively critique, encourage and contribute to others' works.

We know that most students are using blogs and social-networking sites in their personal lives and it is important that they know how to use them safely. Using classroom blogs gives educators a medium with control



and filtering where they can teach students about how to safely and responsibly communicate with others online, in a setting similar to those that they are using in their personal lives to communicate with their peers. Educators using blogs or wikis in the classroom should be sure to address Internet safety with their students as well, addressing topics such as cyber citizenship, revealing identifying information (such as names, photos and home addresses) and inappropriate or cyber-bullying behavior.

It is important to remember that although blogging's potential for a large readership is fantastic when the author wants others to have the ability to read and comment on what is posted in the blog, it could reveal more than the author intends – personal information, thoughts, beliefs, or opinions about family members, friends, employers, work relationships, or business – which could lead to adverse consequences that were never considered. 



Web 2.0 in the Classroom

As students become more and more familiar with Web 2.0 and social-networking tools in their personal lives, so are businesses, government, and industry. These institutions are adopting these tools to collaborate and communicate more effectively within their respective areas of emphasis. Chris Turek, Communications Specialist for Magnolia ISD in Texas points out, “Take for example the current presidential race. Regardless of which candidate you support, there is 100% certainty that the next president is using these tools for communication and understands the importance of good cyber citizenship and online social networks. We can definitively say this because every major political candidate has a MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, or other social-networking profile established to communicate their message to the public. So if the next president is leveraging these tools and is utilizing them in a safe and socially responsible manner, shouldn’t we be teaching our kids these same skills?”

The ability to utilize these tools responsibly, academically, and professionally are 21st century skills that our students need to know. Many schools have chosen to completely block all access to these tools by labeling them as academically unacceptable social-networking tools. Magnolia ISD, on the other hand, has chosen to take a more proactive path by adopting many different techniques within their classrooms in order to ensure student safety through mandatory public school Internet filtering and information literacy training while engaging students academically using similar social-networking tools.

Blogging in the Classroom

Instead of blocking blogging and anything related to blogs, every K-12 teacher within the Magnolia ISD school district has access to a teacher blog in order to communicate and collaborate with their students, parents, and colleagues. Instead of having the teachers sign up for accounts with outside services like MySpace that serve the entire world, they utilize their own blogging solution where they control access and comment moderation throughout the blogging system. The blogs are open to the entire world on the Internet, but there are some safeguards in place to ensure student safety:



- The blog is managed by the individual teacher and all content that goes onto their page is the responsibility of that teacher.
- All comments that are made by students are moderated by the teacher where they have to approve the comment before they go live on the page
- Teachers ensure that students use pseudonyms that protect their identity and monitor comments to ensure identifying information isn’t given.
- The blogs are left open so other classrooms or outside subject matter experts can collaborate through the facilitation and moderation of the teacher.

The benefit of using this open, yet highly moderated, technique is that it models for students responsible use in the classroom and gets them accustomed to using the tools academically. When teachers are using their blogs to collaborate with students by asking them to post comments to a blog post the teacher has made it important that basic expectations are set. It is natural for a young student to write in Internet shorthand or LEET speak when posting content to an interactive webpage like a blog. It is also common for students to be overly criti-


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cal of each other which is the early stage of cyber bullying. Teachers should expect this at first and fight the urge to overly correct this situation by banning a student from the activity right away. Clear objectives and writing style expectations should be set forth before the activity as well as acceptable interaction and objective criticism. These techniques help the students learn how to interact safely online and we have seen teachable moments where the instructor has the ability to identify the early stages of cyber bullying and step in to show students how to both offer and receive constructive criticism while interacting online.

“It is priority number one to keep our kids safe, but we also need to make sure they are ready for a 21st century workforce and society in general. Employers expect a level of maturity once our students walk through their doors as new employees. The world in which we live also expects responsible citizens and all of this falls under the umbrella of good cyber citizenship. We feel like we are




taking steps in the right direction to facilitate this type of character building within our schools.” 

*Christopher J. Turek
Communications Specialist
Magnolia ISD
Technology Department*

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about management, Internet safety, software, images, and podcasting. “Internet Safety and Digital Literacy Strategies for the Social Studies Classroom” written by i-SAFE’s Director of Education and Curriculum Development for the Internet safety section, provides insight, tips, and techniques on how to meaningfully integrate cyber-safety strategies and concepts into social studies at all levels.

Visit www.socialstudies.org to learn more about the National Council for the Social Studies. For information on how to purchase the book visit <http://www.ncss.org/publications/books>. The editors are Linda Bennett, associate professor in the Department of Learning, Teaching, lb@missouri.edu and Michael Berson, professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of South Florida. Tel: (813) 974-7917
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Free i-SAFE Materials

How can i-SAFE materials be free, but not free? This may sound like an unsolvable riddle, but it's not. And, YOU have the solution.

As you know, all i-SAFE materials and trainings are provided to educators and law enforcement personnel at no cost. But, are they free? The teacher or school is not charged to receive or to implement more than 175 e-Safety lesson plans. That same teacher did not pay to attend an i-SAFE Professional Development Program, or to be trained and certified through i-LEARN Online. That may "seem" like everything is free, but there are real and growing costs to create, produce and distribute the i-SAFE curriculum and videos used to educate students across the country about being safe and responsible online citizens. As you see, it's free but not free.

The solution: Your charitable donation of \$20 or more provides i-SAFE with the financial resources to continue to provide educators, students and law enforcement with e-Safety materials at no cost. While i-SAFE has enjoyed federal funding, this assistance was just a start. And, as a result of that funding, i-SAFE has reached the level of success from which we can proudly proclaim, "i-SAFE is the leader in e-Safety education." However, as we move forward, and the number of cyber safe students i-SAFE teaches increases exponentially while government funding decreases, it will take active, caring, generous individuals—like you—to make charitable donations to i-SAFE, so we can continue to provide this unique blend of instruction at no cost to every teacher and every school that want it.

Ready for another riddle? OK, when is a donation not a donation? While your charitable contribution to i-SAFE is a tax deductible donation, think of it more as an investment in the safety of children. How many Ryan Halligans or Megan Meiers are out there? The merciless and senseless bullying they endured online drove them to suicide. What value can you place on a cyber safe, cyber smart generation of Americans? The safety of our nation's youth starts with you! To date, 5 million students have been taught i-SAFE lessons. With your help, we will reach millions more in the coming years. Invest in their future. Invest in e-Safety education. (**Click here**) to invest in i-SAFE.

Two riddles with the same answer. *Thank you for being the solution!* 



To send comments or contributions to the newsletter staff e-mail news@isafe.org or send "snail mail" to: i-SAFE Editor, 5900 Pasteur Ct., Ste. 100, Carlsbad, CA, 92008

About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in e-Safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences. i-SAFE provides knowledge that will enable them to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior, and to respond appropriately. This is accomplished through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to students, parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. i-SAFE is the only e-Safety foundation to combine these elements. www.isafe.org 