



By Anita McAnear

Looking at the variety of technologies in this month's issue, I was struck by how many and varied our tools, delivery systems, and electronic resources are at this point in time.

We have computing devices ranging from handhelds to tablets to laptops to desktop computers. We have multimedia delivery systems using computers and projection devices (choices range from LCD/DLP to electronic whiteboards) or the Web through Webcasting, videoconferencing over IP, or online courses. We also have electronic resources and software tools on the Web, CD-ROM, DVD, and so on.

Wouldn't it be wonderful for students and teachers to always have at their fingertips the right tool for the learning task and a nice integrated system that puts data, resources, and delivery systems together seamlessly?

One of the seven action items of the U.S. Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan (NETP), unveiled in January, calls for integrated data systems. According to the plan, recommendations to states, districts, and schools include:

- Using data from both administrative and instructional systems to understand relationships between decisions, allocation of resources, and student achievement
- Using assessment results to inform and differentiate instruction for every child

ISTE board member Amy Perry-DelCorvo has been telling us about DataMentor (<http://www.datamentor.org>), developed by the Wayne Finger Lakes Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Rochester, New York. This friendly interface enables teachers to access state assessment scores then follow each item through a path, including further examination of the standard and performance indicator, video and text examples, a gap analysis, and a wealth of resources tied to the standard and performance indicator. The scores are shown in comparison, district to region, but the system has the capability to go down to the student level. The system goes a long way in connecting teachers to useful data and providing analysis tools and resources for addressing shortfalls. DataMentor is also embedded in a delivery system called AccelerateU (<http://www.accelerateu.org>), an

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online environment that includes courses and staff development for students and teachers.

A variety of companies also have developed integrated instructional management solutions for K–12 districts.

These types of systems raise many questions that we need to address in the next few years.

- What is the best level for a system? State, county, region, or district?
- Who is the best developer of the systems? Educational agencies or for-profit companies?
- What are the best ways to ensure data security?
- What are the best ways to ensure appropriate use so that teachers, students, and parents are confident about system accuracy?
- What are the appropriate uses so that teachers can use the data without fear that the data will be held against them?

I know that conversations about these questions are happening and that leaders at all levels are making solutions happen. Please share your stories with us through letters to the editor (letters@iste.org) and by sharing article topics you would like to write or would like to see us cover (submissions@iste.org).

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