



Keeping Up with Emerging Technology

ISSUE ORIENTED

By Anita McAnear

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It is a given for technology that there are always many new developments on the horizon. Not all of them are applicable to education, but depending on your subject area, they may be something about which you and your students should have some knowledge. How do we as educators keep up with information and communication technologies (ICT), ICT applicable in education, and other technologies relevant to our fields of study? It is a challenge especially when there are so many day-to-day tasks.

If you are like me, you may feel pretty behind to begin with. Here are a few strategies that have recently brought me some exposure to what is happening now and what is on the horizon.

There is nothing like a good book to bring you somewhat up to date. I did some catch up by reading Joel Barker and Scott Erickson's book, *Five Regions of the Future*. Joel Barker was a keynote speaker at NECC 2005 in Philadelphia and spoke about the book. In it, they not only cover myriad technologies, but also organize them into a framework to help you think about and envision a positive future. If you want a taste of what's in the book, listen to the Webcast of Joel's speech at <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2005/program/webcasting.php>.

To continue to stay somewhat up to date, there is nothing like a succinct newsletter delivered via e-mail every month. William (Bill) Daggett of the International Center for Leadership in Education sends out a monthly briefing of information on trends and technologies that will have effects on education. The categories include: Information Technology, Cyber Security, Biotech-

nology, Nanotechnology, and more. To subscribe, visit <http://www.icle.net/form.html>.

Conversations and conference presentations by folks in the know also contribute to our knowledge. Kathy Schrock and Leslie Fisher both do "gadget" sessions at conferences that help catch us up on interesting and promising technologies, which we always hope will make our lives easier. Linda Law, who is a visual artist working with many forms of digital imaging, photography, and video projection, has been telling me about dome video and the projectors used to project digital images onto a dome like a planetarium. Prices are coming down, and these systems are being sold to schools.

Of course, there is also nothing like seeing technologies first hand. If you travel for work or pleasure, try to find time to visit science centers, museums, and other organizations or companies with cutting edge research or facilities.

You can also enlist your students to help you keep up. This idea comes from John Thompson at the Illinois Math and Science Academy and is written up for ISTE's Advocacy Tool Kit (<http://www.iste.org/advocacy/toolkit>). When Thompson's students learn about a promising technology, they become the resident experts and share what they learn with the faculty and other students. You'll find a few of the tool kit items in the Learning Connections section this month (p. 35).

Finally, read *L&L*, as we do cover emerging technologies with educational applications. Enjoy the November 2005 issue and consider writing an article yourself!