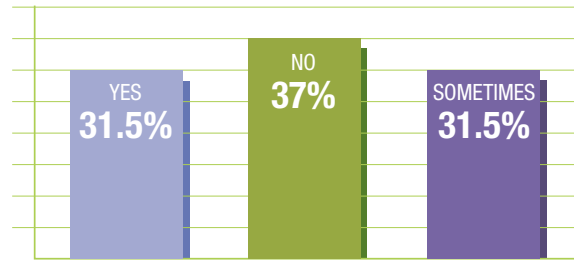


READERS respond

Should **IM** be **BANNED** in the **classroom**?



Instant messaging was the topic of our April 2005 Point/Counterpoint column. From the results of our online poll and reader survey, it is obvious that we have not reached consensus on this issue and opinions are strongly held.

“Yes, as it exists today—I would hate to see a “bully” embrace it. No, because it does encourage communication for all students. Sometimes, because time on task may be critical to an assignment. I wonder if there is enough bandwidth to enable all the computer technologies to work in harmony (network, Internet, e-mail, and IM usage). Sometimes our whole system at school just slows down. As you can see, I have mixed emotions about this. It depends on what it is used for. It depends on if it is used for abuse.”

*Donna Armstrong
Clearview Regional High School District, Glassboro, NJ*

“Instant messaging and cell phones should not be in the classroom. There was a very interesting article in the *Dallas Morning News* today [“Inbox Is Out as Teens Opt for IM,” July 28, 2005] that addressed teenagers and IM. It is becoming a big part of their life. Multitasking is second nature to this generation. The drawback is the amount of time spent and the fact that there is very little supervision. However, we may look back on this in a couple of years and say why didn’t we jump on the bandwagon sooner.”

*Joan Gore
Texas Computer Education Association, Lewisville*

“There are so many ways kids can bypass and do instant messages. Preventing them in school only adds unnecessary paperwork for teachers (in case of violation of rules). When I was a teenager, India banned *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*; guess what: I got a copy somehow because I wanted to see why it was banned. When I was a little girl, one of the Sunday school instructors told me that I was not supposed to read *Song of Solomon*. I read it overnight and wanted my mom to discuss the reason for the inclusion of the book in the Bible. So, when you prevent the kids from doing something, they will always find a way.”

*Mano Talaiver
Institute for Teaching Through Technology & Innovative Practices
South Boston, VA*

“Yes, I think instant messaging should be banned in schools. I see instant messaging as a distraction to student learning. It distracts students from their education and thus prevents students from being attentive to the lesson at hand. One needs to ask the simple question, “What is the purpose of education?” to determine if instant messaging is something that should be allowed in the schools.”

*Sr. Matthew Marie Cummings
Aquinas College, Nashville, TN*

“When I was in school, colored markers were new and forbidden. I survived, but thought writing in black ink was dull. Is this question really about the technology of instant messaging or about the ageless issue of passing notes in class? There are many engaging educational applications of IM, let’s use them! Today, I love to write ... in IM, in colors.”

*Annette Lamb
Indiana University, Indianapolis*

“Instant messaging could be used as a valuable tool in the classroom. It allows for instant student collaboration on projects that are occurring simultaneously, but in different locations, whether it is across the hall or across the country. Students would be able to make changes, ask opinions, and collaborate easily.”

*Elaine Fitzgerald
St. Charles Parish Schools, Luling, LA*

Please consider participating in our ongoing series of Point/Counterpoint articles, polls, and feedback opportunities. Find upcoming topics on the *L&L* pages of the ISTE Web site, as well as the current poll (always a single question). We also invite you to send us your views on the topic by e-mail. If you send us a digital photo with your response, you just might see your smiling face beaming from a future issue.