

MEMBER profiles

SIG

Everything Old Is New Again

The origins of the newly revamped Special Interest Group for Computing Teachers were planted in the early days of microcomputers. Joseph Kmoch is the president of SIGCT. “SIGCT actually got started long before ISTE came to be. The Oregon Computing Association was formed in the late 1970s with a group of educators who were teaching computer programming and computer science, because that’s all you could do in those days.

“Our SIG focuses on teaching *about* computing, as opposed to teaching *with* computing,” Kmoch explains. “We decided to change our name [from the Special Interest Group for Computer Science] and with it expand our mission to include teaching computer science and computing in PK–12 education for all students as well as students and teachers interested in specific topics.



“Learning about computing is broader than computer programming and related disciplines,” Kmoch continues. “There is a broad range of opportunities for kids to learn about various aspects of computing: networking, system support, interactive multimedia, Web design, programming. There has been a new push toward including fundamental concepts of computer science—algorithmic thinking and problem solving in particular—throughout K–12.”

According to Kmoch, the group’s current projects include refocusing the online *Journal of Computer Science Education*, looking at other means of communications for the SIGCT membership—including wikis and

blogs, and continuing to support a strong strand of computer technology and computer science sessions and workshops at NECC. The SIG also hopes to establish recognition for excellence in teaching about computer science and computing. The SIGCT Executive Committee and other interested members have created a wiki (<http://sigcs-ct-futures.wikispaces.com>) to share and develop ideas.

Kmoch says ISTE members who join SIGCT stand to gain by becoming part of a network of educators whose interest is in teaching about computing and computer technology. “There’s really no other organization where teachers who deal not only with teaching programming but also with teaching networking, system support, or Web curricula can come together,” Kmoch says. “We hope this expands very much in the next few years.”

Affiliate

Louisiana Educators Make Joining Easy and Rewarding

LACUE, the Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators, is a vibrant and active group.

Unlike many similar associations, LACUE offers free membership. Applications can be filled out at the group’s Web site.

Although available at no charge, LACUE membership includes numerous benefits. In addition an easily navigated Web site, with an attractive and useful quarterly newsletter (Summer 2006 is 16 pages), the group hosts an annual statewide conference with more than 1,500 attendees. LACUE’s 22nd annual conference is in Baton Rouge this year, November 29–December 1.

The annual conference is also complimented by regional conferences. LACUE has eight regions, many of which produced conferences this past year. Recognition and sharing are key elements of both the regional and statewide conferences.

LACUE awards cover educators, from classroom teachers to administrators to involved parents, and community members. For 16 years, the group has also sponsored a lesson plan contest with cash prizes.

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