

# MEMBER profiles

Tina Steele

## Bringing NECC Back Home

For most people, NECC 2007 ended when they left Atlanta. Not for Tina Steele. The technology director continues to learn and share her ed tech knowledge with colleagues in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

"I have always been a fan of NECC. This year, I loved that the keynote speaker, Andrew Zolli, was a futurist. I took the most from David Warlick and Chris Lehmann's workshop, 'Advanced Blogging and SideBar Envy.' I also joined Second Life during NECC07. The torch was passed down from Ryan Bretag and Jen Wagner, and now, I am the proud owner of the Blogger's Café in Second Life, a continuation of the Blogger's Café from NECC07."

Since the conference, Steele has become a Web 2.0 enthusiast. "I love



the conversations that are occurring within the blogging and twittering universe. Educators have wonderful ideas and are willing to share. Web 2.0 tools are a wonderful way for students to become engaged, rather than disengaged. We should be using them in our classroom instead of locking them out!"

Steele also integrates technology into her other profession as a piano teacher. "Students practice music theory using various software programs and games. They also compose using the computer and keyboard. During group lessons we play accompaniment music using my iPod connected to an amplifier and two keyboards."

As a short-term goal, Steele wants to share what she's learned at NECC07 with educators in a more substantial way. "This school year I will conduct five or six 'Lunch and Learn' sessions entitled 'The Digital Native,' introducing Marc Prensky's concept of the digital native/digital immigrant. Then, I want to introduce Web 2.0 tools to instructors who want to learn how to use them for personal use, and then eventually use them in the classroom.

"My long-term goal is for our school to implement ISTE's standards for administrators and teachers at our school. I believe that this would raise the standards for all of our staff and help us advance our vision 'to be our community's best choice for educational services.'"

## Special Interest Group

## Ensuring Information Access for Everyone

Andrew Kerr, Communications Officer of the Special Interest Group for Digital Equity, was introduced to ISTE while working as an instructional technologist in the Midwest. Since moving to Guam in 2000 he has been an active proponent of NETS in the U.S. Pacific territories and several Asian countries.

Kerr works with universities, government agencies, and international schools that have a lot of funding and resources as well as remote island groups and rural locations for whom educational technology is the only cost-effective option. "I promote technology only as a tool to get from A to B," he says. "That ranges from one-to-one laptop/student solutions to using



HF radio for e-mail and Internet access and about everything in between."

Kerr is excited by the development of cost-effective document readers and handheld computers. "In the rural parts of Asia and the Pacific region, it is possible to load hundreds of books and locally created materials for education and health on an SD card and ship it to remote locations with a solar charger to provide schools and health dispensaries with libraries of information."

Shipping costs to remote locations are often prohibitive, Kerr says—some

of the islands only see a ship every three months, and it costs thousands of dollars to ship one container—and destructive elements such as salt air and weather destroy books easily. "For the cost of shipping one container of used U.S. textbooks, an entire remote school can be outfitted with current (and some locally created) material on readers and/or handheld computers with solar chargers. The entire package would fit in a duffel bag."

Kerr considers the digital divide to be his biggest challenge. "Information is the key to success in today's world," he says, "and access to information in the developing world is still out of reach of the majority. I am working with groups to help provide cost-effective solutions to get information access to everyone."