



## Assessing Technology Use in the Classroom

ICOT Project Director **Mark P. Andrews** discusses ISTE's free tool for measuring qualitative and quantitative ed tech data.

ISTE designed its *free* Classroom Observation Tool (ICOT) to help educators measure key indicators of technology integration in educational settings. The categories of data collected using ICOT provide insight into the relevance of technology in teaching and learning situations through observation of such things as student groupings, teacher roles, and applications and uses of technology, as well as documentation of the indicators contained in the NETS•T. The user makes choices to generate reports, and data is generated in both qualitative and quantitative formats.

The tool is constructed using a free version of Adobe Air as an application that can be downloaded from ISTE's Web site for use with either PC or Macintosh. ICOT presents observation items in a checklist format for quick and easy entry. All the observer has to do is click on a radio button or checkbox on the Web form to record the evidence. The form also includes textboxes for entering comments and descriptions as needed or to record unique criteria related to the needs of the user or group.

Users can then upload the completed form to ISTE's Web site for storage and/or additional processing. Users create accounts where they can store

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multiple observation forms, request automated reports that aggregate and summarize data, or download raw data from observation forms for customized processing locally in Excel or database programs. The automated reports enable users to organize and compare data for a number of different purposes, such as observations of a single teacher over time, of multiple teachers in a single school or district setting, or of participants in a specific program.

As educators increasingly are being asked to provide data on the effects of technology on teaching and learning, ICOT offers a field-tested observation tool that reflects ISTE's unique perspective and its acknowledged expertise on the effective use of technology to advance teaching and learning. ICOT is intended to be used for gathering formative data for improved understanding of technology use and integration, but is best used in conjunction with other evaluation tools and processes that complement direct observation.

The ICOT Web site has an introduction to issues related to sound practices in classroom observation,

along with training materials to help users learn to use the forms, request reports, and manage data. Implementation scenarios and introductory tutorials provide valuable resources for educators in becoming familiar with how ICOT can support their assessment of technology use.

ICOT is supported by the Hewlett-Packard Company (HP). ICOT and its supporting materials will be available free to the public on ISTE's Web site beginning at NECC 2008 in June. Additionally, ISTE is planning several sessions to allow educators to familiarize themselves with the new tool. Further information will be available at <http://www.iste.org/ICOT>.

—ISTE's ICOT design team includes Mark P. Andrews, ISTE director of Educational Leadership Business Development; David Barr, PhD, ISTE consultant and member of the NETS Leadership Team; Kathy Hayden, EdD, associate professor of Educational Technology at California State University San Marcos and member of the ISTE Standards and Accreditation Committee; and Talbot Bielefeldt, ISTE senior educational leadership research and development associate. Contributions were also made by Hilary LaMonte, program director for HP's Technology for Teaching Grant Program.