

# MEMBER profiles

## ISTE's Young Educator of the Year Is a Resourceful Guy

If you're one of those educators who's gone searching for pay dirt on the internet, only to find more great ideas than you know what to do with, you understand that free digital resources can be both a blessing and a curse. No matter how well you tag and bookmark, it can often be a challenge to find that great interactive science lesson you remember discovering last summer.

Fortunately, there's another free web resource that can save you from the burden of having, well, too many free web resources. EduTecher ([www.eduTecher.net](http://www.eduTecher.net)) is a labor of love that Adam Bellow created to rein in resource overload.

"I started eduTecher in 2007 to keep track of all the great sites I was finding," he says. Before long, he shared it with the college students he was teaching, and they loved it. "I decided then to devote more time and energy to making it one of the best places to learn about new web tools and how to use them."

Today, the site, which was redesigned in April, is a gold mine of easy-to-find sites. EduTecher allows users to keep a "backpack" of resources that they can categorize, annotate, and share with friends. There are no ads, and although it takes a tremendous amount of time and his own resources to maintain, it will always be free, Bellow says.

"With a loving wife and two young boys, it is not always easy to make time," he admits. "But when I hear from users about how helpful the site is to them, it is all worth it."

Bellow is the winner of ISTE's 2011 Young Educator of the Year Award.

Last year he was named an ISTE Emerging Leader.

He started out teaching high school students with learning disabilities and then became a districtwide technology training specialist. Now he is the director of educational technology for the College Board Schools in New York, which are public schools that serve students in low-income and traditionally underserved areas. They focus on preparing students for college. Bellow works with educational leaders and teachers to help them infuse technology into the classroom.

His passion for technology began years ago when he was a young boy. He loved the educational computer game "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" and he started programming his own games in BASIC as a third grader, he says.

"I think what I really fell in love with was what the tools let me do," Bellow says. "While I loved the game aspect of computers, I really enjoyed creating art, animations, and music."

And he enjoys finding educational uses for tools that were not designed for classroom use. As a teacher in 2004, he wanted to help a student with dyslexia who could not read very well. There weren't very many audio books available at that time. So Bellow decided to use GarageBand to record the student's assigned book. He recorded



Adam Bellow

it on CD, put it on iTunes, and then uploaded the MP3 file to an iPod.

"The student was so appreciative," he says. "It felt so good to be able to help him."

It was experiences like that one that made Bellow an evangelist for ed tech. He goes to great lengths to win over naysayers. Bellow recalls a tech training session he taught several years ago. One of the teachers in his group made it clear from the get-go that she was not taking the class willingly.

"She told me point blank: 'I am retiring. I don't care. I'm not going to use this.'"

Bellow remembers how she kept her head down "just like a teenager." But ultimately she was expected to adapt one of her lessons for the electronic whiteboard. When she did, something clicked, and she got it. "She thanked me for breathing life into her lesson and helping her go out on top," he says.

And that's what it's all about, he says. "Educational technology can inspire, encourage, challenge, and enable teachers of all content areas and learners of all abilities."

—Diana Fingal is senior editor of L&L.