Tech Beat

Technology with a heartbeat

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Distribute Your Own E-Book!

One attractive aspect of teaching and learning online is the ability to hop-hop around from one item to another through hypertext or links. A textbook is linear, with sequential pages that develop the topic. Websites, on the other hand, use hyperlinks to let you get to the point and skip what you don't need or want to know. An *E-Book* is a digital book, with all of the navigation features of a website.

To develop an e-book, simply create a few linked pages on your computer. In other words, create a simple website, with a home page (index.htm) that leads to other pages of related information. When you have the pages developed, open your e-book application, click in the pages you want, and there you have it—a book with complete navigation features (Back, Forward, Home, etc…) in a complete package that can be distributed online or on CD's. Businesses are going crazy with e-books for advertising. As educators, we can teach and learn with them. Your program can create an e-book to give to funders or politicians to show off your great features. While you can't cover your head with it in case of sun or rain, it can provide great shelter for the mind.

Is it expensive? No. It's free unless you want to pay for more bells and whistles. Download your free copy at http://www.ebookcompiler.com/. Read about e-books, scroll down the page, and click on the "download" link! The program comes with an easy, step-by-step tutorial, but it's also pretty instinctive if you don't like instructions. If you don't like that one, go to Google and find one you do!

Is if difficult? Not at all, but you do have to know how to create a Web page in Front Page, Dreamweaver or any of the other dozens of programs that help you do that. (I can teach anyone to create and publish Web pages in one day!)

Do you need Internet connectivity? No. E-Books use digital media but they can be read offline.

Want to see an e-book in action? Click on the link below, select the book you want, and either run or save the file to your desktop. (Be sure to notice the navigation bar at the top.) http://www.swadulted.com/ebooks.htm.

O*Net

The Occupational Information Network, or O*Net, has resources developed to support the efforts of the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The O*Net site provides free instruments to help workers assess their interests, skills, and other work-related characteristics. As a former career counselor, I often used their six occupational profiles (realistic, social, enterprising, conventional, investigative, and artistic) to help people understand their interests in different careers. The O*Net assessment is rather lengthy, but if you search further, you can find very simple tests that will identify your profile.

To explore the site, go to http://www.onetcenter.org/site.html. O*Net told me to feel free to use their tools with as many people as I wanted. They want their stuff used! However, they don't want people changing their stuff and selling, of course!

Summer Classes from PBS

If you or someone in your community wants to gain credits in a very supportive online environment, check out the resources and summer catalog at http://teacherline.pbs.org/teacherline/. Not all courses are specific to K-12 teachers. Much of the information applies to us as well.