Welcome to the first edition of NCREL’s Technology News, a biennial newsletter published by the Center for Technology at NCREL. As one of ten laboratories in the regional laboratory network, NCREL is the leading laboratory for research in the field of educational technology.

The first edition of this newsletter highlights Web sites and products created by the Center throughout 2001, as well as research projects that we currently have underway. Inside, you learn about the updated version of our popular Web site enGauge; the launch of our latest Web site, the NETRO Clearinghouse on Educational Technology; and our new E-Learning Knowledge Base Web site. As well, we focus on our work with our partner organizations NCRTEC and NCMSC.

Thank you for your interest in our work. NCREL invites you to learn more about the Center for Technology by visiting our Web site at http://www.ncrel.org.

Research currently underway:
- Learning with technology in out-of-school, after-school programs
- High-performance, high-technology schools
- High-performance, high-technology teacher preservice programs

Be sure to check out NCREL’s new Web site!
http://www.ncrel.org

The design and content have recently been updated.
The Center for Technology’s new page can be found at http://www.ncrel.org/tech.
enGauge Update

enGauge is a framework designed to help districts and schools plan and evaluate the system-wide use of educational technology. It provides a comprehensive view of critical factors in the educational system that strongly influence the effectiveness of learning technology.

Initially released on December 1, 2000, enGauge is under constant development based on feedback from field experiences. As we approach the one-year anniversary of the tool, we would like to thank all those who have provided us with invaluable information and feedback. NCREL has worked with NCRTEC and the Metiri Group to incorporate your suggestions into what we feel is a “user-friendly” Web tool.

We have shortened the enGauge surveys to take less than an hour. The average time to take a survey is around thirty minutes. The survey questions now use common language whenever possible. Also, the profile report form has also been revised to include an executive summary.

In the spirit of keeping technologically up-to-date, the server was upgraded to provide more robust access. The hyperlinked Web report is immediately ready to share in a presentation format. In addition, there is new content for 21st Century Skills, Essential Conditions has been updated, and The Continuum has a new look. You can see enGauge at http://www.ncrel.org/engauge.

The NETRO Web Site Has Arrived

The Center for Technology recently launched the NETRO (NCREL’s Educational Technology Resources Online) Web site. NETRO brings together on one convenient site links to all of the various NCREL educational technology Web sites that NCREL has designed over the years. The site presents new information and links to the latest NCREL technology products, as well as links to all of NCREL’s partner sites in the field, including the NCRTEC and NCMSC Web sites.

In addition to NCREL-related information, the site contains the NETRO Resources Database, which provides users with searchable access to non-NCREL sites that present current research, best practices, and policy information for use in the field.

As the database is developed over the next few years, it will become a clearinghouse for educational technology resources from all areas of the field. Through a partnership with Indiana University, NETRO will soon feature one of the most current interactive search functions available on the Web. Extensive metadata research on these search features has been conducted already, and NCREL is excited to be pursuing such cutting-edge technology.

To check out the NETRO Web site, visit http://www.ncrel.org/

Technology Standards for School Administrators

The Collaborative for Technology Standards for School Administrators (TSSA Collaborative) had a media briefing on November 8, 2001 at the National School Boards Association’s 15th Annual Technology + Learning Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, to release the newly established technology standards for school administrators. “This was a collaborative initiative that developed and documented a national consensus on what PK-12 administrators should know about and be able to do to optimize benefits of technology use in schools.”

The North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NCRTEC), operated by NCREL,
provided the design and printing of the standards brochure. Standard brochures may be requested from NCRTETC by e-mail, ncrtec@ncrel.org.

For a wealth of other technology resources, see NCRTETC’s newly redesigned Web site at http://www.ncrtec.org.

The TSSA Collaborative can be found on the Web at http://cnets.iste.org/tssa/.

**E-Learning Knowledge Base**

E-learning, or online-equivalent, courses are one of the most significant new applications of learning technologies to emerge in the last ten years. A growing body of research, program evaluation, theory, and policy analysis is documenting the rapid introduction of e-learning in postsecondary institutions in the United States and around the world.

In response to growing interest, NCREL is releasing a new Web-based information resource entitled The E-Learning Knowledge Base. The new Web site includes a review and synthesis of current literature on e-learning and a 350-entry online “annotated bibliography” linked directly to a selection of the best online resources available on the Internet.

NCREL plans to maintain and update the knowledge base so that K-12 teachers and education leaders will have easy access to information on critical issues concerning development and deployment of e-learning in the K-12 schools.

**21st Century Skills**

The CEO Forum Policy Paper, Education Technology Must Be Included in Comprehensive Education Legislation (March 2001), recognizes that technology not only changes how people learn, it affects what they need to learn as well. This paper acknowledges the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in addressing this critical educational issue on the enGauge Web site.

Eight nationally recognized skill sets informed the identification of the enGauge 21st Century Skills, which are separated into four categories: Digital-Age Literacy, Inventive Thinking, Effective Communication, and High Productivity. The enGauge list is intended to provide the public, business, industry, and education with a common understanding of and language for discussing the skills needed by students and workers in this emerging Digital Age. enGauge is based on the premise that preK-12 schools should incorporate 21st-century skills into school curricula within the context of academic standards.

The translation of these skills in places of learning, and, most importantly, the appropriate assessment of these skills through multiple measures, will ultimately determine whether today’s children will be prepared to live, learn, work, and serve the public good in a digital, global world.

**Research Spotlight: Learning with Technology “Beyond the Bell”**

Children’s learning opportunities today are very different than they were just ten years ago. Two of the major trends have been the increasing integration of technology into learning in school, and the increasing number of opportunities to learn out of school through school- and community-based “beyond the bell” programs.

These trends intersect in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, for which over $846 million were appropriated in 2001 alone.

How are children learning with technology in the Centers? What are the links between learning with technology in the Centers and in the schools where they are located? In hope of answering these questions, we conducted a national telephone survey asking Center Directors these questions and others. Look for the results on NETRO this winter.

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