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# netc circuit

NETC Celebrates 10 Years of Educational Technology at NWREL

## Director's Message

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven ...  
...a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance...

—Ecclesiastes 3

This is my last message as the Director of the Northwest Educational Technology Consortium—as of September 30 federal funding for this program ends. For the last 10 years NETC has been the heart of my professional life. I've had the privilege of working with committed, creative, and caring colleagues whose major focus has been to help educators use the technological tools of our time to make education more effective and relevant. We, in turn, have been inspired by those of you “in the trenches” whose innovative, imaginative and, in many cases, very simple uses of technology have helped transform your classrooms, your buildings, and your districts. We thank you for your inspiration and your tireless efforts for your students, your teachers, and your community.

Just for a moment go back to 1995 when NETC began. Had you used the Internet? Had you used it with students? Were you connected at home or at school? A major issue in 1995 was how to get schools connected. We talked about the “last mile problem,” which looked past just connecting the school office or library and connecting each classroom. We wondered where the funds would come from. And then something that many didn't consider beforehand: if you did get connected, what were you going to do, how would you meet state standards? Well, the funds to get us started and keep us connected came from the E-Rate and teachers found ways to incorporate technology and access with state curriculum standards. But I can assure you that in 1995 most educators saw obstacles and couldn't yet imagine the solutions that developed.

Now come back to the present, 2005. Many of our students do not remember life without the Internet. They can't imagine not having instant messaging, downloading music, finding information on the Internet, and checking e-mail. They keep in contact through their own Web sites, blogs,

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Northwest Regional  
Educational Laboratory

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and text messaging—and these aren't just our privileged students. In 1995 could you imagine that this interconnectedness would be so prevalent? I didn't!

So where will we be in 2015? Today's educational innovators are talking about ubiquitous computing, where everyone has some type of connected computer, whether a handheld, laptop, cell phone, or a combination of these. Some districts have gone "textbook free," using electronic texts and online curricula. All these developments bring us once again to the issues of equity and access that we faced in 1995—how will these devices be funded, how will we provide access for all, and how will we meet AYP? As I make my way through yet another cycle, I realize that even though I can't see all of the answers to these questions, I do know that this is where we are going.

To help us understand the various paths that will be explored over the next years, this final issue of the *NETC Circuit* looks at where we have been, where we are, and speculates about where we are headed. Don Holznagel, director of the Technology in Education Program at NWREL from 1983 to 1996, provides an almost 40-year perspective of changes in education technology in *Respect and Retrospect*. You probably won't be surprised to learn that many of the issues we face today—funding, staff development, appropriate materials, tech support—are not recent developments.

Steve Wyborney, Oregon 2005 Teacher of the Year, helps ground this issue with a reflection on students, technology, and instructional practice. Teachers like Steve have shown us over the years that technology is not the answer, but rather a set of tools and applications that can be a great catalyst when used with powerful beliefs and pedagogy. One of his beliefs for his students, "You are amazing: Expect much of yourself" applies to all of us.

In *Parting Gifts*, three of my NETC colleagues, Gary Graves, Judy Van Scoter and Kirk deFord, provide insights into the lessons we have gained. Gary, who has been with NETC since its inception, shares in *Onward to the Next 10 Years*, how his experience working with districts throughout the Northwest these past 10 years has taught us lessons that will help us through the next 10. Judy informs us that NETC is leaving "a parting gift" of a new Web site—*Focus on Effectiveness*. This site takes the research on effective classroom practices and shows how technology supports and extends these strategies and approaches. I encourage all of you to visit [www.netc.org/focus](http://www.netc.org/focus) and review this new resource. Our *Digital Bridges* Web site has gone through a major revision based on our research into recent developments in online education. Kirk has spent much of the last six years working in this arena. In *Bridging Distance Education Options* he describes how the revised Web site will help students, parents, and educators understand this rapidly changing world of online education.

In this last issue, we turn to creative innovators for a glimpse into the world of ubiquitous computing. In an interview, Dr. Kyle Peck of Penn State University, who organized the first national conference on one-to-one computing, shares his perspective on the impact of one-to-one learning environments on the future of education. And to help us understand how a one-to-one project is planned and implemented, we turn to Eva La Mar, coordinator of the Springfield (Oregon) Middle School One-to-One Laptop Initiative. In *Education in the 21st Century: One-to-One Learning Environments*, Eva shares many of the implementation lessons she has learned and provides links to extensive resources that help us understand what it takes to make a laptop initiative work.

## Thanks to So Many for So Much

Through the years there have been many people who have contributed to our success. We have gained so much from the suggestions, direction, and ideas of our advisors and from our consortium members at the state departments of education: Cecelia Miller, Alaska EED; Dawn Wilson and Rich Mincer, Idaho IDE; Michael Hall, Montana OPI; Carla Wade, Oregon ODE; David Walddon, Dennis Small, and James Smith, Washington OSPI. Each of the state departments that comprise our consortium has outstanding and dedicated staff in educational technology. Though funding may not be plentiful, they continue to be a wonderful resource.

Finally, I want to thank all the NETC staff who over the years have contributed to our success at NWREL. Without their efforts, we would not have accomplished so much. And, please remember that although our federal funding has ended, the [www.netc.org](http://www.netc.org) Web site will continue to be available through the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. ■

*Seymour Hanfling, NETC Director*

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## Thanks to NETC staff 1995–2005

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