



Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP)

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E-Learning: Growth and Diversity

“[Charles Schulz's](#) only formal training in art was a correspondence course in cartooning.”
([About.com](#), Distance Learning)

Although learning at a distance has had a long history, the exponential growth resulting from recent advances in technology has made it ever more important and more difficult to keep up with changes and new developments. This issue brings together some of the best sources of e-learning information, from background to delivery.

E-Learning Trends and Statistics

- [A Brief History](#). A PBS timeline of distance learning innovations from the 1800's until today.
- [The Changing Faces of Virtual Education](#). A July 2001 report done by Britain's Commonwealth of Learning on the growth of e-learning internationally. A companion report done in 1999 by the same organization is [The Development of Virtual Education: A Global Perspective](#).
- [Home Computers and Internet Use in the United States: August 2000](#). A report edited by Eric Newberger of the U. S. Census Bureau, issued as one of the *Current Population Reports*, September 2001. An essential source of statistics on the availability of computers and the Internet to potential e-learners of all ages.
- [The Internet and Education](#). Findings of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, September 2001, demonstrating statistically how the Internet has become an increasingly important feature of the learning environment for young adults.
- [A Virtual Revolution: Trends in the Expansion of Distance Education](#). A report prepared in May 2001 by Thomas J. Krieger for the American Federation of Teachers.

Listings of E-Course Offerings

- [About.com. Distance Learning](#). A very comprehensive listing of almost any kind of e-course imaginable with links to much more information on topics related to e-learning.
- [CollegeLearning.com](#). A commercial Web site developed by the International Center for Distance Learning that facilitates locating, applying for, and paying for e-learning courses.
- [Distance Learning Exchange](#). A free, easy-to-use service provided by the state of Pennsylvania that provides a clearinghouse of many Web-based educational opportunities.
- [eLearners.com](#). Listings of more than 24,000 e-courses and 2400 e-learning degree and certificate programs offered by 1600 providers, plus links to products, services, and resources.
- [The International Distance Learning Course Finder](#). The largest directory of e-courses from more than 130 countries, with information on more than 55,000 courses and programs.
- [Interactive Quest Network Learning Intelligence on the WWW.™](#) A collection of information on e-courses for degree, continuing education, skills certification, or personal growth.
- [Peterson's Distance Learning](#). Listings of programs and courses from participating institutions, with an emphasis on Instructional Technology and Business programs. Additional information of use to the potential distance learner, including financing options, is included.
- [Public Broadcasting Services Adult Learning Services](#). A catalog of more than 100 PBS telecourses, with a growing number of Web-based offerings, plus much more.
- [Telecampus Online Course Directory](#). A Canadian-based project listing e-learning opportunities worldwide that range from correspondence, print-based, courses with e-mail tutor support and submission of assignments to interactive Web-based courses. In English or French.
- [World Lecture Hall](#). A Web site created at the University of Texas, Austin, that links to Web-based courses worldwide. This site offers an excellent opportunity to examine all the components of an online course, from syllabus to exams.
- [Worldwide Learn](#). A commercial Web site that lists hundreds of online courses, degree programs, certificates, professional continuing education and learning resources in 50 subject areas offered by educational institutions, companies and individuals from all over the world.

E- Learning Organizations and Associations

- [**American Center for the Study of Distance Education.**](#) Established at Penn State University in 1988, this organization is a network of scholars with a common interest in the field of distance education. The center publishes several e-learning journals.
- [**American Distance Education Consortium \(ADEC\).**](#) An international consortium of state universities and land grant institutions providing e-learning programs, with an emphasis on selected subject areas.
- [**Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education \(AACE\).**](#) An international, educational and professional not-for profit organization founded in 1981 and dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge, theory, and quality of learning and teaching with information technology at all levels.
- [**Educause.**](#) An association of more than 1800 colleges and 180 corporations formed to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. It is well-known for its publications and programs.
- [**Global Network Academy.**](#) More than just a list of 30,000 e-courses and 3400 programs, this organization also provides limited free Web site hosting, as well as channels for students and teachers with links to useful resources.
- [**Instructional Telecommunications Council \(ITC\).**](#) An organization that offers extensive information about e-learning, with a focus on community colleges. It publishes monographs on e-learning practices and produces lists of useful links, one of which, [**Statewide Virtual Networks.**](#) supplies complete contact information to all regional and statewide systems.
- **Regional and Statewide Efforts.** In addition to national organizations and associations, regions and states have formed agencies that allow participation by those within their boundaries. The [**Electronic Campus of the Southern Regional Education Board \(SREB\)**](#), for example, provides services to institutions in that region. State-level ventures like the [**Florida Distance Learning Consortium**](#) and the [**Florida Virtual Campus**](#) are just two of the many offered around the country.
- [**United States Distance Learning Association \(USDLA\).**](#) A nonprofit organization formed in 1987 to promote development of e-learning at all levels, including home school education, corporate training, military and government training, and telemedicine.
- [**The Wellspring.**](#) A collaborative project from Instructional Systems Inc. and Columbia University Teacher's College that provides support of all kinds to those involved in e-learning delivery.
- [**World Association for Online Education \(WAOE\).**](#) An international professional organization concerned with teaching online, public services for international society, and collaboration with other educational organizations functioning in cyberspace.

E-Learning Information Resources

- [**The Chronicle of Higher Education. Distance Education Daily Updates.**](#) The very latest news in the field of e-learning.
- [**Distance Education Clearinghouse.**](#) A University of Wisconsin Web site that brings together e-learning information from local, national and international sources. It includes links to current e-learning news, events, research, policies and guidelines, delivery methods and much more.
- [**Distance Learning Resource Network \(DLRN\).**](#) The dissemination project for the U. S. Department of Education Star Schools Program. It includes links to resources for educators and adult learners interested in e-learning.
- [**Distance-Educator.com.**](#) A Web site that provides news about distance education published every weekday, plus links to useful resources of all kinds.
- [**Ecollege.com Educator Resources.**](#) A page on a commercial Web site with resources for faculty and administrators that include news, enrollment management information, Web resources, events and more. The company also sponsors [**The Center for Internet Technology in Education \(CiTE\)**](#), which partners with academic institutions to explore current issues related to Internet-based technologies in education.
- [**WebEd Resources.**](#) A Web site maintained by the University of Washington that includes a comprehensive list of links to resources for faculty and e-course developers.

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