



Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP)

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A Look at Leading Edge E-Learning Technologies

“Using technology to improve learning requires new methods and materials.”

(Dr. Sylvia Charp, Editor-in-Chief, [T. H. E. Journal](#))

This issue offers a sampling of intriguing new technologies to enhance the delivery of e-learning in a variety of ways. It is not an endorsement of any product, and offers neither the last word nor a comprehensive overview of resources. Instead, the diverse items included here are intended simply to highlight some new ideas and whet the imagination of planners and users of educational technology.

Hardware and Digital Technologies

- [Bluetooth™ microchip](#). A much-heralded innovation that will allow devices of all kinds (computers, cell phones, even cars) to communicate and transfer data. Slow in being fully implemented, the chip is predicted to revolutionize wireless communications by 2005.
- [Connected touch pad](#). Portable LCD display, keyboard and modem combination that plugs into any home phone line for Internet use.
- [CueCat™](#). An inexpensive bar code scanner that connects to a computer for easy access to Web sites it recognizes.
- [Digital photo album](#). A portable unit that can display any downloaded images simply by plugging it into an electrical outlet.
- [Digital photo printer](#). Portable printers that plug into and print from digital cameras or computers.
- [Group response systems](#). Wireless devices that allow electronic feedback between participant and presenters in interactive meetings.
- [Interactive flip chart](#). Allows the user to make any standard paper flip chart interactive with a PC, utilizing a traditional pen while simultaneously saving the information as a file.
- [Internet TV](#). High tech TVs that can surf the Internet, send email and more. A move beyond WebTV toward the true convergence of the Internet and a standard television set.
- [“Internet2: Making the Connection.”](#) Article by Apryl Lundsten and Eileen Flick in *Syllabus* 14(8), March 2001, gives an update on the status of this effort.
- [Notepad portfolio](#). Device that captures handwritten notes on ordinary paper and sends them to handheld devices like Palm organizers.
- [Portable SoundStation™ Satellite](#). Hardware bundle that allows portable audio-conferencing.
- [Portable whiteboard](#). A 14” “capture bar” that rolls up into a briefcase-sized package for easy transport.
- [Quicktionary II™](#). A pen-shaped scanner that translates words into one of ten languages.
- [Streaming video](#). Examples of what various departments at Stanford University (CA) have added to their Web pages.
- [Touch-interactive screen](#). Converts a standard monitor into a touch-interactive device.
- [Touch-screen electronic book](#). Article by Jessica Ludwig in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3/19/01, describing an electronic book that can be leafed through using a touch-screen.
- [Video-flex™ camera](#). Small, portable camera that enlarges images and displays them on a TV.
- [Video on demand](#). Examples from the Futures Channel, a commercial educational enterprise.
- [Wearable computers](#). A concept of some vintage that has many unusual possibilities. Recent and related are [digital camera](#), [Global Positioning System](#), and [MP3-audio wristwatches](#).
- [Wireless networks](#). Overview by Jean Shields in *Technology & Learning*, 21(8), March 2001, of how a state-of-the-art wireless network is constructed and functions. Another source of wireless information is the [Wireless Solutions](#) column in *Converge*, March 2001.

Innovative E-deas in Specific Subject Areas

- [BitBop© Tuner](#). Formerly the Radioactive Tuner©, this Internet radio product finds and downloads music on the Web as requested by individual Internet users.
- [Computer Lab Instruction Software](#). Allows monitoring of student screens and quick response to student questions or problems.
- [Concept Mapping Software](#). Latest version of sophisticated Inspiration™ diagramming and outlining software for students of all ages.
- [Connected University](#). New commercial Web service that offers just-in-time online courses on specific technology-related subjects for teachers, administrators and technology coordinators.
- [Digitizing Tablets](#). Designed for CAD/CAM, GIS Mapping, and other industrial users, this line of products converts film images, graphics and drawings into accurate digital information.
- [Electronic Screen Reader](#). Converts online text to speech with control of how text is displayed and read. Designed for those with learning, visual or reading impairments. Product of [CAST](#), which also hosts an informative Web site with news on technologies for those with disabilities and has created [Bobby](#), a free online service that allows Web page authors to identify barriers to access by individuals with disabilities.
- [Online Tutoring](#). Web-based tutoring on demand in a variety of academic subjects.
- [Robotics on the Web](#). Whether it's the LEGO-based [ROBOLAB™ System](#) for beginners or the [Lab-Volt Automation™](#) product for job training, Web sites exist to teach robotic concepts.

Finding the Best of Existing E-Learning Technologies

- [CNET.com](#). Ongoing source of evaluation of new and existing technologies of all kinds.
- [Education with New Technologies](#). Web site sponsored by Harvard (MA), designed to help educators develop, enact and assess effective ways of using new technologies.
- ["A Field Guide to the Dot-Coms."](#) Article by Angela Chnapko in *University Business* 4(2), March 2001, with profiles of the top 100 e-learning companies.
- [Plans to Purchase Survey 2000. Executive Summary](#). Annual report by *T.H.E. Journal* that gives an overview by type and amount of how schools at all levels are spending money for educational technologies.

Selected Educational Technology E-Sources

(Good for keeping up with the latest developments)

[Educational Technology and Society.](#)
[Chronicle of Higher Education.](#)
[Converge.](#)
[FETConnections.](#)

[Syllabus.](#)
[Technology & Learning.](#)
[T.H.E. Journal.](#)
[University Business.](#)

Some Upcoming Educational Technology Conferences

[Syllabus Conferences](#) - April and November
[E-Learning Conference and Expo](#) - April
[International Conference on College Teaching/Learning](#) - April
[International Conference on Technology in Education \(Florida State University\)](#) - May
[National Education Computing Association](#) - June
[Ed Tech Conference 2001](#) - July
[Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning \(University of Wisconsin\)](#) - August
[International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies](#) - August
[Association for Advancement of Computers in Education WebNet-World Conference](#) - October
[Educause 2001](#) - October
[League for Innovation](#) - November
[Florida Educational Technology Conference](#) - March 2002

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