

MCCE

MCCE NEWS

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and
Technology in Education

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Cut Bank Schools Use Grassroots Approach to Funding Technology

by James O. Gregg

Every year the local school budgets in Cut Bank, Montana get a little bit tighter. With the decline of oil production in Glacier County, inflation and a declining enrollment in the elementary, School District #15 is faced with some tough budget decisions. Sound familiar? Many of Montana's school districts are facing similar problems. Today's schools are struggling to stay afloat, supporting teachers' salaries, building maintenance, books, resource centers, art and music instruction, lunch programs, athletic gear, lab equipment. In these recessionary times, some of those necessities, technology among them, are in danger of becoming luxuries. Sometimes, technology takes a back seat when it comes to school budget concerns.

The local school Board in Cut Bank is very supportive of technology in the schools. In the past five years the district has established a Wide Area Network connecting all four schools. Each building has a Local Area Network supporting both PC and Mac platforms with Internet access in every room of the schools. The district does a fair job of supporting the network, updating software and hardware and with staff development and inservice. As budgets become tighter, will the support for technology waver? The elementary staff has taken steps to help supplement and support the technology they have.

In past years the teachers in the school district would put on a Computer Carnival in the spring to help raise money for technology. This effort was mainly supported by the elementary staff. The teachers set up game booths in the gym and invited the community to bring their families and have some fun! Games, prizes, refreshments and fun. It was a lot of work for the staff, but provided the community with an enjoyable family activity and raised an average of about \$1000 for technol-

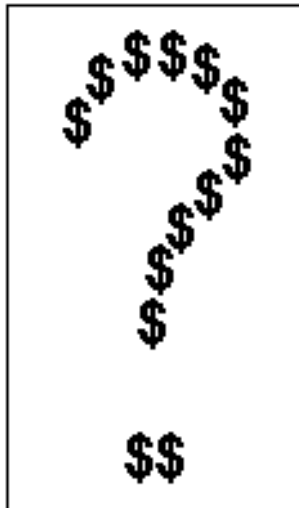
ogy.

The Cut Bank Elementary Schools decided to undertake a corporate partnership with a company called, Freedom Industries in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Our school began the program, "Computers For Education," in 1993 and has continued every year since.

The program involves having the students fill out the names and addresses of nine relatives and friends. These names and addresses are then sent to the company who then mails each a personalized, pre-addressed note with a small catalog listing some 250 magazines. The Computers for Education rates are very competitive and the company guarantees that the names and addresses are not sold or used for any purpose other than their magazine sales. The schools in turn receive payment for providing these notes. This program is very simple to run. It lasts only for five school days and requires no door-to-door selling or collection of money. Our schools have earned over \$10,000 in the past seven years through this partnership.

This year our staff decided to participate in another corporate partnership with the IFS Company. This fund raiser involved the students bringing home a

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LEADERS IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY JOIN FORCES

NECA Contracts with ISTE for Executive Services

Perfect partners collaborate in the mission to connect curriculum and technology. ISTE (the International Society for Technology in Education) and NECA (the National Educational Computing Association) have negotiated a contract for executive services to further the relationships between the two organizations. John Vaille, ISTE CEO, will devote part of his time to expanding NECC (the National Educational Computing Conference), the NECA LIGHTS initiative, and other NECA-supported projects.

In addition to ISTE's providing behind-the-scenes program and publications support to NECA for the past 15 years, the two organizations have successfully collaborated on workshops at NECC since 1998 and three symposia: Minority, Leadership, and Computer Science Information Technology.

Working even more closely together, ISTE and NECA plan to advance their common mission of improving education through the use of appropriate technologies.

ISTE is a nonprofit professional organization supporting a worldwide membership of technology-using

educators. ISTE is dedicated to helping educators improve all levels of education by integrating computer-based technology into the curriculum. ISTE accomplishes this mission by supporting the unique needs of its constituents-providing them with access to instructional resources, initiating and endorsing relevant legislative issues, and creating professional development opportunities. Visit us at NECC 2000 in Atlanta (June 26-28, Booths #1845 and 1847). Learn more about ISTE's leadership role in educational technology by visiting www.iste.org.

The mission of NECA is to advance educational philosophies, practices, policies, and research that focus on the appropriate use of current and emerging technologies to empower all individuals to reach their full potential. The primary vehicle for this mission is the National Educational Computing Conference, an annual event for those interested in improving teaching and learning with technology in K-12 and teacher education. Leadership of NECA is provided by an elected board of directors, a management team, and representatives of 14 national nonprofit educational and scientific membership societies. Visit www.necsite.org for more information.

The City of Rome presents the GLOBAL JUNIOR CHALLENGE

The City of Rome has launched the GLOBAL JUNIOR CHALLENGE, a world-wide award for the best information technology projects in the field of education. The award is open to companies, institutions, organisations and individual citizens of all types that have developed projects aimed at children and young adults.

The best projects will be

presented in December 2000 at an International Conference held in Rome and hosted by our Mayor, Francesco Rutelli.

Participation to the GLOBAL JUNIOR CHALLENGE offers many advantages such as visibility for your project and exchange of experiences with other people developing similar initiatives. The Challenge also offers you the

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425 Grand Ave.

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opportunity to exhibit your project at the International Conference *Youth into the Digital Age* which will take place in Rome in December 2000 and which will be attended by experts and personalities from the technology and

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(Editor's Note: Beginning in this issue, our President-Elect will be tracking down some interesting grant and award opportunities that may be of interest to the membership.)

by *Suzie Flentie*

This page has a really extensive list of grants for technology in education. I found several listed in the eSchool news and on other sites, but they're all covered on this list.

<http://www.learner.org/sami/pages/fund-1.php3>

I did find a few others, but their deadlines are in March. Teacher Universe was planning to launch a new web-based data base of k-12 grants in February, but it isn't there yet. I checked out the site and it still says coming soon. It's supposed to be called the Grant Locator. They've been researching and developing it for the last 6 months. Here's the site where it will be located.

<http://www.teacheruniverse.com/resources/resources.html>

Also, there is a Grants and Funding for School Technology conference was held in Kansas City on April 27th and 28th, if anyone is interested. They can find out more about it at this address.

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/gf/>



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12 September 2000

This and past issues of MCCE News are available on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.mcn.net/~vlong/mcce.htm>

Cut Bank Funding

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variety of gift catalogs from the IFS company. The students don't sell door to door, but sell to family and friends only. The products are guaranteed and may be returned for a prompt replacement or refund. The students took orders for two weeks and the products were received a week later. The students then deliver the product and collect the money. The program involved guaranteed money to the school for participating along with a 40% profit on all items sold. Our elementary schools made approximately \$8,000 on this fund raiser this year.

The efforts made by the elementary staff in Cut Bank have greatly impacted the quality of education here. The staff has made a commitment to helping supplement the school board's funding of technology. This commitment and dedication can only improve the quality of education that technology helps provide the students of the Cut Bank schools.



EMS AIM TO GIVE IT-CERTIFIED TEACHERS \$5,000 CASH BONUSES

Democrats in Congress are spearheading two initiatives aimed at supporting technology in education. The Information Technology Act of 2000, led by Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), would provide teachers with \$5,000 cash bonuses for receiving certification in an IT course.

Under the initiative, \$500 million would be earmarked for the bonuses over a five-year period. The bill would also set aside \$100 million over the next fiscal year for federal matching grants for the private sector and institutions of higher education to provide IT training for veterans, senior citizens, dislocated workers, and other groups that lack a strong presence in the IT field.

Education and technology groups support the IT Act of 2000, while some Republicans say the initiative assumes too much control over how states spend money and detracts from resources that could be spent to hire new teachers. A second Democratic initiative would significantly boost the resources of two existing school technology programs through an amendment to the National Digital Empowerment Act, which aims to bridge the digital divide. The plan would double the resources of the Preparing Tomorrow's Teacher to Use Technology program, which trains future K-12 teachers to use technology in the classroom, from \$75 million to \$150 million.

(eSchool News Online, 10 April 2000)

Those Bit By the Bug Have No One to Blame But Themselves

By Vince Long

In the wake of the recent "I Love You" or "Love Bug" virus, I began reflecting on where we are in the acceptance of technology in our personal and professional lives. It was only a year or so ago that the "Melissa" virus wreaked similar havoc on unsuspecting computer users and, like this current virus, it created a feeling of violation among those who received and were damaged by it. Other users were left fearfully trembling every time they checked their e-mail.

Some of the fear can be attributed to the way the media covered the story, spreading misinformation about what the virus is and what it might do. Technically it's not even a virus, but a "worm," however, the public understands "virus" as something bad, at least to the extent the news media needs them to. Stories about how one might acquire this malady differed as did the solutions. Some media items mentioned only one e-mail program as being the gateway while other stories carried anecdotal evidence about users acquiring it via Web-based e-mail like Hotmail and even through a Macintosh.

While the ultimate responsibility for software that is malfunctioning or functioning malevolently lies with its programmer, much of the responsibility for spreading this latest affliction has to be borne by the recipients of these infected messages. Until fairly recently, e-mail was a text-only world where communication was limited to what could be typed from the keyboard. Emotions were expressed in a classical way with prose or in an abbreviated way with the use of "emoticons," or

"smilies," made by stringing together an assortment of punctuation symbols to yield expressions of happiness :-), or sadness :-(or wryness ;-). Since our systems have taken on the capability of transmitting embedded, attached, or linked multimedia right from our desktops, many users feel compelled to use this feature and to heck with the bandwidth and other problems with its use.

Years ago, as the Internet community began to grow from a loose assortment of research facilities to eventually include anyone with a

...much of the responsibility for spreading this latest affliction has to be borne by the recipients of these infected messages.

university identification card, a set of rules developed covering how members of this community should behave when using the network and interacting with one another. These rules, though unofficial, were not arbitrary but evolved through years of community input in what was a very democratic process. The rules were collected in FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) or RFCs (Request For Comments) and covered virtually every topic related to the use of the Internet from downloading protocols to use of mailing lists. The FAQ generally took on a question and answer format while the RFCs were more technical and appeared in a

narrative form, sometimes including computer program source code. Newbies were cautioned to read the FAQs before making a network faux pas that would bring the wrath of the other users to their e-mail doorstep with "flames" or "mail bombs."

One of these rules, had to do with file attachments as part of e-mail. File attachments are a highly useful tool, however, the sending of "unsolicited" file attachments has always identified the sender as a "newbie," a "lamer," or both. Most users have a limit on how much file space their service provider's e-mail system will allow them and receiving someone's recent video of their dog's birthday party could cause revocation of their privileges. The proper way to approach this matter is to ask, via e-mail, if the user would like to receive the document as an attachment before it is sent. We need to go back to this form of proper manners on the Internet.

Not only does the recipient get veto power over what they receive in their e-mail box, no one wastes bandwidth transmitting unwanted data. Another advantage of receiving prior approval is that the sender and receiver can agree on a file format. Over the years I have had people send me Macintosh files that will not open on my Windows machine, word processing documents that my word processor will not open, and pictures that would not fit on my 19" monitor. A bit of discussion ahead of time ensures that compatible formats can be used, saving the hassle of sending the document again, usually closer to a deadline.

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Bit By the Bug

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Looking at the recent virus/worm issue we see that if good, old-fashioned netiquette was followed, this problem would have been avoided. In order to launch the virus on a computer, the recipient not only opened the e-mail, a safe act in itself, but also opened the unsolicited file attachment itself. This is as foolhardy as picking a stray piece of organic material off the ground in a public place and, wondering what it could possibly be, eating it. One might say, "But I know the individual who dropped it!" That might be true on the street, but the Internet is one place where one is never too sure who is on the other end of the line.

I recommend that users never, Never, NEVER open unsolicited file attachments of any kind, from anyone. Solicited attachments are also of concern and should be thoroughly scanned with an up-to-date virus scanner prior to opening. A more permanent solution for Windows users is to disable the computer's ability to run these errant programs in the first place. The Love Bug virus was written in the VisualBasic programming language. It can be saved and opened in a text editor or word processor where it's contents can be safely examined. A portion of it looks like this:

```
Set dirwin = fso.GetSpecialFolder(0)
Set dirsyst = fso.GetSpecialFolder(1)
Set dirtemp = fso.GetSpecialFolder(2)
Set c = fso.GetFile(WScript.ScriptFullName)
c.Copy(dirsyst & "\MSKernel32.vbs")
c.Copy(dirwin & "\Win32DLL.vbs")
c.Copy(dirsyst & "\LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs")
```

While it is safe to examine the file in this manner, it is easily launched by double-clicking on it which causes Windows to run it as a program using the built-in interpreter, the Windows Scripting Host. By default this feature is installed with Windows 98 and versions of Windows 95 that have been upgraded, but the functionality is easily turned off with out affecting the normal operation of the computer. To do so, follow this procedure:

- Click on Start
- Click on Settings
- Click Control Panel
- Double Click on Add/Remove Programs
- Click on the Windows Setup tab
- Click on Accessories
- Click on Details
- Scroll Down to the Windows Scripting Host
- Uncheck its box
- Click OK
- Click Apply

Disabling the Windows Scripting Host will prevent a Love Bug type of virus from launching, but it will not prevent other executables from being launched from your e-mail program. Again, the best defense is to delete any unsolicited e-mail attachment.



The World of FAQs

Information in Internet FAQs is not limited to information about computing but spans the world of human interests. These FAQs and RFCs are now easily accessed from one place at <http://www.faq.org>. Searching through the listing of documents found there reveals a range of topics from LEGOS to Mythology to Woodworking to traveling in Turkey.

INVESTIGATE THE WORLD OF BUGS AND GET FREE KIDS SOFTWARE

The new Scholastic's(r) The Magic School Bus(r) Explores Bugs CD-ROM is a fun-filled, fact-packed science adventure for your kids. Shrink down to wee-bug size, find the missing insects from Ms. Frizzle's class, and learn interesting bug facts along the way. For a limited-time, order the CD-ROM and you can send away to receive your choice from other kids software for free. <http://www.microsoft.com/insider/mi/pfbugs.htm>

Gobal Junior Challenge

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education fields.

Moreover, all participating projects will be listed on our Web site database and in our final publication which will be widely distributed both at the conference and in other occasions.

We invite you to visit our site www.GJC.COMUNE.ROMA.IT for further information on the GLOBAL JUNIOR CHALLENGE where participants can submit their projects using the special entry form provided.

We look forward to seeing many projects from your country and remain at your entire disposal for further information.

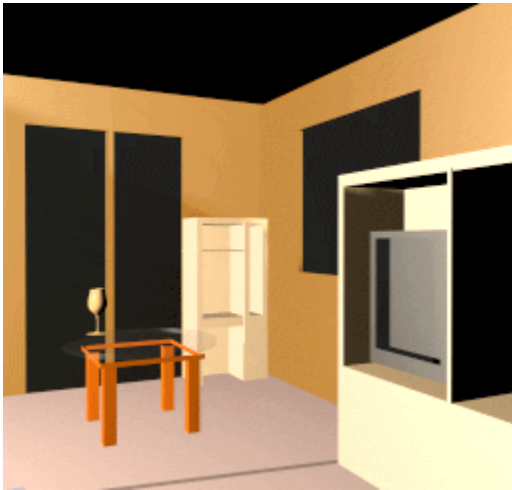
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Student Review of 3D Software

By Eric Custer

3-D Studio and Pov-Ray allows anyone with the desire to create a world of three-dimensional images to do so in any way imaginable. There are no limits to either of these programs capabilities or creations that it allows a person to do. It only depends on the ability of the user to learn the program and their idea for a 3-D scenario. It might be a good idea to have a little background in art and an understand lighting and camera scenes. Those cool animations you see at the theater could be done with either program but a lot of time is needed and the right education.

3-D Studio has the help menu for all the materials need to



3D Studio Image by Eric Custer

creat your images beside the work you are doing, while Pov-Ray has the help files else where, so most of the stuff needs to be remembered. Although both programs can allow a person to create 3-D images, the programs have their ups and downs for delivering the information needed to learn and understand the

program. They also have their own style of displaying the image and creating it. For example, each program has its own way of creating a simple object such as a cube. With 3-D studio, you can simply select 'I create cube' and place it with you pointer in a viewport. Whereas Pov-Ray takes time. You have to specifically type the coordinate of one comer of the cube then another comer, after which you then need to type the texture and color. With 3-D studio, you only have to choose the file color

and texture then place it on the object or objects that you desire. Pov-Ray takes time even after you learn the basics of program commands. It even takes longer to render the scene with Pov-Ray. 3-D studio puts all of the options right in front of you, and the viewports are right there allowing you to see your progress as you create images. The viewports show the front, left, top, and user view. Adjusting points, lights, and cameras is done by simply placing

or moving in 3-D studio while Pov-Ray requires the user to type it all out.

I guess if you're a programming genius that types well and understands all of the commands, Pov-Ray is the 3-D imaging program for you. Extra files can be a pain to add on later even if you know all of the commands. They both obviously take time to learn, but 3-D studio is



3D Studio Image by Eric Custer

more practical. 3-D studio gives a clearer self explanatory text with easily constructed demos. Once you learn simple structures, you can simply generate small 3-D scenes.

What about animation you ask? 3-D studio introduces you to animation in the first chapter. 3-D studio allows you to move an object one keyframe at a time, even in wire frame, before rendering the entire scene. A Wireframe is a preview of your complete image made up of square images with a black outline. It seems more practical to see your progress as each object is added or after each frame you add to your animation. Pov-Ray starts you out by introducing you to the program, just as 3-D studio does, but then skips all over the place. Unlike 3-D studio, Pov-Ray does not start out with simple objects like a cube, sphere, or tube and then working up to the complex objects with the texture and lighting. When it comes to adding your own files or creating your own

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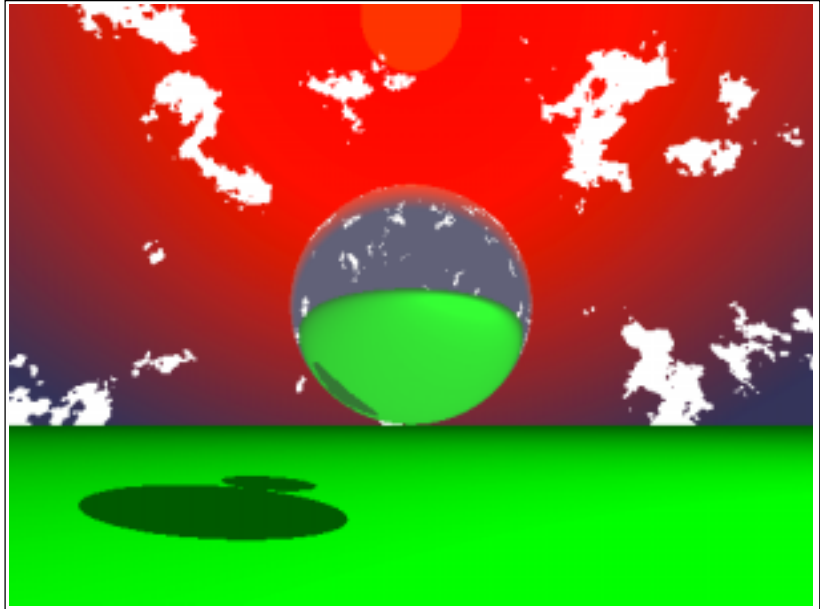
3D Software Review

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color or texture for your own specific image. Pov-Ray and 3-D studio allow you to create specific colors or textures and add them to a library or call existing ones from a file directory. With Pov-Ray, It's easy to find files of textures and shapes under the help file to import to your image, but is complicated to imply to your existing image.

You have to be aware that both programs can produce the same quality 3-D images, but I spent more time on 3-D studio than Pov-Ray. The programming aspect does not suit my style. I enjoyed having the 3-D studio book in front of me to help me one step at a time. It simply made the process a lot easier. Both of these programs helped me understand the world of 3-D and gives me an idea of what to expect in the career field. Of course, this is only the start and I have a lot more to learn and need better education and the right tools to complete my training.

I have provided the best information I could from the knowledge I have acquired from the programs I have done. I have used 3-D Studio for about two semesters. I went throughout the entire book reading the explanations and doing the demos. After each chapter I have read, I tried taking the information that I have learned and made my own images. I have a good feel for the viewports, simple objects, coloring, textures, lighting, and keyframe. The more complex images and distorting of the images are more difficult. It is very simple to create images directly in the 3-D scenes but creating a 2-D image and importing it



POV Ray Image by Eric Custer

to a 3-D scenario is a problem. I learned a lot on 3-D studio but have much more to learn to accomplish it.

Pov-Ray is another story, as I have used it for

about six weeks and all ready know I do not like it. First of all, it is all done with programming text. It takes a lot more time to learn and you do not even see your progress as you work. Pov-Ray is just way too time consuming.

Eric Custer is a senior at Billings Senior High.



Montana Council for Computers and Technology in Education
Membership Form

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Area of Interest: College _____ High School _____ K-8 _____

Please be an active member by indicating your area(s) of interest:
 willing to be an officer
 willing to submit articles for the newsletter
 willing to be on the Board of Directors
 willing to work on MCCE committees
 willing to be on a committee for a convention

Dues: _____ \$12.00 per year _____ \$30.00 for 3 years

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