



# MCCE NEWS

MONTANA COUNCIL FOR COMPUTERS  
AND  
TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Vol. 21, No. 3

Summer 2009

## Virtual Books and Vocabulary Builders: *How to Enhance Literacy in an Online World*

by Katie Kotynski

Facebook, Twitter, podcasting—the public, and in particular the Google generation, is communicating in all new ways. No longer enthralled with scanning bookshelves in a library, these digital natives want information at the click of a mouse. As the world becomes more and more connected to the digital universe, so must the English community accept online and digital resources as a way to promote reading and writing. Here is a list of a few electronic communication arts forms that may appeal to natives and those of us from the pre-computer age.

### Gutenberg Project

<http://www.gutenberg.org>

Started in 1971 by Michael Hart, a man who wanted to provide important texts to the public for free, the Gutenberg project has collected and preserved works of literature that are no longer subject to copyright law in the United States, 28,000 books and counting to be exact. Project partners bring the total to over 100,000.

From Shakespeare's works to a *Child's Garden of Verses*, this excellent resource provides a way for folks to read literature online as well as download for viewing on an electronic book reader or computer when not connected to



the Internet. Literature comes in both audio (can be played on an mp3 player) and eBook format.

Many stories have hyperlinks on the more difficult vocabulary that instantly brings up the definition of the words in an online dictionary. Feeling helpful? The project can always use proofreaders and monetary donations.

If you want to keep up on the latest additions to the project, sign up for its RSS feed to receive updates when new material is added.

### Rosetta Project

[www.childrensbooksonline.org](http://www.childrensbooksonline.org)

If you are looking for children's books, you might be interested in the Rosetta Project: Children's Books Online, which was started in 1996.



Although not as friendly as the Gutenberg project because the books are scanned images rather than text or pdf format, it nevertheless has quite a selection of classic fairy tales and children's stories.

And the beauty of scanned pages is that they contain the full-color original illustrations. So if you want to read *Alice in Wonderland* to your children, for example, you can marvel at Alice as her neck stretches or see the Cheshire cat's sly grin.

This site also is looking for translators and book readers to help complete the library. In addition to books, the site provides downloads of out-of-copyright musical compositions, songs and sheet music.

### In This Issue

Virtual Books	Page 1
President's Column	Page 2
TILT	Page 5
Science Class Project	Page 6
Free Developer Software	Page 7
Virtual NECC	Page 8
Membership Form	Page 9

(Continued on Page 3)



As the school year winds down and the summer approaches we tend to become rather involved in the day to day business of surviving the end of school. Each of us becomes less

outward looking and more focused on the short range goals of end of school business and our own world of our class.

Please remember that we have a summer institute in August and that we are heading to MEA days in October. On that note as you look to attend MEA plan to attend and support the offerings that are out there by your fellow members. The support you give enhances both their sectionals and the prestige of MCCE. On top of this it tends to give each presenter more feedback and encourages them to again present. If we are to maintain our ability to maintain MEA convention and all this entails we not only need to go and support this process, but also to support our fellow members.

Have a superior summer and bring back to MCCE the good parts of summer seminars you attend.

John Mark Jenkins President MCCE



## Montana EdTech Summit

This year's Montana EdTech Summit will be held in conjunction with the Montana Institute on Educational Technology June 8-12, 2009 in Great Falls.

Montana EdTech Summit 2009 is accepting applications for workshop session proposals.

Presentations selected for workshops will be Tuesday, June 9, 2009.

Here's the link to present!

[http://www.nr-es.org/2009/ettech2009/2009call\\_for\\_presen.htm](http://www.nr-es.org/2009/ettech2009/2009call_for_presen.htm)

Those who present will be eligible to attend Monday's keynote and afternoon sessions for free in addition to being paid \$46 per hour for your teaching session.

Hope to see you all here in Great Falls!

Katie Kotynski  
Instructional Technology, Great Falls Public Schools



### *MCCE NEWS*

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**Next Submission Deadline:  
September 12, 2009**

This and past issues of MCCE News are available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.mcceonline.org/>

## Virtual Books

(Continued from Page 1)

### Learn out Loud

<http://www.learnoutloud.com/>

Learn out Loud is the web's largest collection of free audiobooks, over 20,000. These can be downloaded for playback on a computer, ipod or mp3 player. You can also purchase copyrighted titles, but perhaps the best part of this site is the Teach-out-Loud section.



Instructors can post their lectures as podcasts or even submit videos and tutorials for students to use. You may also browse selections that other instructors have posted. You do need to create an account, but registration is free.

### Big Universe

<http://www.biguniverse.com>

The Big Universe is another site for creating original books



online, but its free registration is restricted to five days. In addition to reading student-created works, students can create their own stories and publish them online (free) or print for an additional fee.

The site also has ebooks and electronic books for purchase. Teacher membership includes an option to eliminate ads from the site.

### Create Your Own Book

[tikatok.com](http://tikatok.com)

With Tikatok teacher edition, students start writing and illustrating their stories on paper and then upload their story into a story editor.



With no software to install, students simply type in their story, scan and upload their images, and add personal

touches such as a custom cover, photo and author biography.

Teachers can monitor progress, add comments to stories, and assign tasks all as students work on composing their stories.

When the students have finished their stories, parents and others can order copies online, in either paperback or hardbound. In addition to students having fun writing, this site provides an easy way for schools to create collaborative projects such as recipe books or school history compilations to sell to earn money.

### Electronic Book Reader

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**Kindle**—who could resist having 500 books at their fingertips without having to rent a u-haul trailer to put them all in. The Kindle or Sony eBook reader is the answer to this dilemma. With a back lit screen, either the Kindle or Sony's ebook reader, can be used to read in bed or in that camp tent.



How many times have you highlighted passages in a text only never to revisit them? With the Kindle, readers can instantly call up all highlighted items for review. The Kindle, unlike Sony and other ebook readers, has Internet connectivity.

Now, Montana does not have the high speed Evdo connection, so we cannot download from Amazon without an online computer, but, hopefully, we will soon. In this way, users can be anywhere and decide they need another book, log on to Amazon and purchase it for the relatively small amount of \$6-10, depending on type (best sellers are \$9.99), and have it downloaded instantly to their Kindle.

### Vocabulary Building

<http://www.vocabulary.com>

With all of this reading and writing on the web, you may



(Continued of Page 4)

## Virtual Books

(Continued from Page 3)

need to increase your vocabulary, and [vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com) is just the site to help.

With thematic puzzles, root word lessons, word lists and test prep (ACT/SAT) as well as features of the month (For May: Cinco de Mayo, Kentucky Derby), you will increase your word knowledge in no time. You may also want to subscribe to the monthly newsletter.

### Word of the Day

Speaking of vocabulary, several sites offer a word of the day, some with subscriptions that will email you the latest vocabulary each day:

[www.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/mwwod.pl](http://www.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/mwwod.pl)  
[dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday](http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday)  
[wordsmith.org/words/today.html](http://wordsmith.org/words/today.html)  
[www.nytimes.com/learning/students/wordofday/index.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/students/wordofday/index.html)  
[www.oed.com/cgi/display/wotd](http://www.oed.com/cgi/display/wotd)  
[education.yahoo.com/college/wotd](http://education.yahoo.com/college/wotd)  
[www.wordthink.com](http://www.wordthink.com)



### Trav Lang

Looking for a bit more of a challenge? Try **TravLang** ([www.travlang.com/wordofday](http://www.travlang.com/wordofday))

This site not only has a word of the day but a sentence, and translates it—both written and oral—into over 80 other languages



### Word of the Day for 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders

[www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/words/middle](http://www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/words/middle)  
And for fun, the **Worthless Word of the Day**  
[home.comcast.net/~wwftd](http://home.comcast.net/~wwftd)

An advertisement for the 2009 MCCE Summer Technology Conference. The text is arranged in a stylized, overlapping manner. The main title is '2009 MCCE Summer Technology Conference'. Below this, it says 'August 10, 11 &amp; 12 Billings, Montana' and 'http://www.mcceconference.com'. In a separate box, it lists '15 Presenters', '45 + Sessions', and 'Hands-On Workshops'. To the right, it says 'Sign Up Online Today!', '\$50 for 3 days of hands-on instruction\*', 'Laptops available if you don't have one', and 'Time to explore and create'. At the bottom, it notes '\*Additional \$125 for college credit' and 'Pay online or on first day of'.

### TILT: Another Year of Learning , Another Year of Growth

by Desireé Caskey

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Billings teachers participating in the technology staff development program called TILT, showcased what they have learned for the year. Thirty-eight teachers participated in the showcase, with one honorary TILT teacher joining in the project.

Each teacher who participates in TILT must demonstrate what they have learned, how they have used it, and how they have shared that knowledge. Our showcase is a bit like a science fair...colorful displays, computers and lots of milling around.

The ideas displayed were amazing and creative, as were the displays the teachers made. We had several teachers this year do collaborative projects using wikis, Voicethread, and video conferencing. We had classrooms using Skype to communicate with experts from different parts of the world. We had teachers providing staff development to groups of teachers during professional development days. The activities that these teachers are doing with their students, community and each other are simply amazing!

We had Kathi Hoyt present her learning...from Hawaii via Oovoo. She startled more than a few people when she would start talking from her computer!

Dan Erikson and Kerra Olson collaborated on a storytelling project that involved Dan's 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Poly Drive Elementary and Kerra's 1<sup>st</sup> graders from Orchard Elementary.

To see more pictures, you can visit the TILT SNS:  
<http://bpstilt.ning.com>



or go directly to Smilebox: <http://smilebox.com/playBlog/4f544d7a4d446b7a4e413d3d0d0a&blogview=true>

## Will James 7 Navy Science Class Project

by Liz Madden

7 Navy science students are currently caring for the flora and fauna of our classroom. Earlier this year, students researched their favorite houseplant and made a laminated, 3-fold brochure from the results of their search. Although most students are currently caring for a plant, there are still some plants that we have not been able to locate within our very limited budget. Attached, is a list of some houseplants we are still trying to locate for students. Any help with plant starters would be super appreciated! Thank you to all who have helped us in this endeavor! The students will be taking their plants home this month.

Along with our in-depth studies, such as cell chemistry, cell reproduction, and genetics, 7 Navy students also recently hatched out some chicks and ducks in our classroom. Judging by the fascination and loving attention doted on these little miracles, our students have proven to be very caring individuals, and are no doubt destined to be top-notch members of our community!

Having just finished a short unit on evolution this week, we will devote the rest of the school year to classification and investigation into the various kingdoms and phyla of organisms. As part of this investigation, 7 Navy students have embarked on an internet project called "Bucket Buddies" (see the link, and ask your child), which is a forum for students around the globe to classify and compare macro invertebrates (animals without a backbone and that can be seen without a microscope) in local pond samples. We will be investigating samples from Will's Marsh of the Audubon Conservation Education Center.



Finally, the last week of school will include group dissections on (dead and preserved) bull frogs purchased through Carolina Biological. Parent lab helpers are most welcome, as the students have many questions and could use another pair of eyes helping them to locate organs in their lab. I have never required a student to dissect if they are truly adverse to the activity, but I have also never had a student decide at the end not to participate. All dissections are done with great respect for the animals and students.

We have had a very productive year, in which I continue to be deeply honored in sharing learning experiences with our fabulous youth! May you all have a safe and restful summer. And please remember to play outdoors in this incredible state, which we so proudly call, "home"!

Bucket Buddies:  
<http://www.k12science.org/curriculum/bucketproj/>

We are currently searching for starts or seeds of these plants that the students hope to care for in class and adopt as their own. House plants still needed:

Angel's trumpet  
Star orchid  
Moth orchids (4 students)

Cymbidium orchid  
Ponytail plant  
Bonsai tree (cedar)  
Gloxinia  
Yellow cactus  
Hamatocactus  
Passionflowers (2 students)  
Hibiscus (4 students)  
Egyptian paper plant  
Lotus or water lily  
Venus fly traps (14 students!!!)  
Hedgehog cactus  
Tilandsia  
Mimosa or sensitive plant  
Coralberry (2 students)  
Baby's tears  
Star of Bethlehem  
Madagascar jasmine  
Kangaroo vine  
Dwarf pomegranate (2 students)  
Fatsia  
Temple bells  
Vanilla orchid  
Dipladenia sandei  
Hedgehog aloe  
Calamondian (dwarf) orange tree (6 students)  
Bamboo  
Chili pepper  
Cast iron plant  
Lobivia (cactus)  
Ficus (small-leafed)  
Prayer plant (2 students)  
Fiddle-leaf ficus  
Peacock plant  
Chenille plant  
Table fern (Boston fern)  
Mammillaria vaupelii (cactus) (2 students)  
Croton (we had one, but it died)  
Star cactus  
Christmas chili pepper  
Ferocactus  
Cleyera japonica  
Partridge-breasted aloe  
Rosegrape  
Kaffir lily  
Wart plant (2 students)  
Glory lily  
Cyclamen

(Continued on Page 8)

## Free Developer Software from Microsoft

by Vince Long

Although most computer users are familiar with Microsoft products such as Windows, Office, and Internet Explorer, most have had little exposure to the range of developer tools that the corporation also produces. To encourage the use of these tools, Microsoft now makes them available, at no charge, to students and teachers of colleges and high schools through their DreamSpark project.

Software products, like Windows, begin their lives as lines of computer code written in one of the many hundreds of programming languages available. Over time, tools were developed to facilitate this labor-intensive process. For example, libraries of code that work like building blocks can be imported into a project to eliminate the need to rewrite common functions, such as file opening and saving. While



The top of the heap in this tool set is Microsoft's Visual Studio. It comes in various editions depending on the range of tool needs and prices range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. The basic edition comes with a set of designer tools along with the programming languages C#, C++, and Visual Basic. It is optimized to enable team design through work flow management.

Most computer users, and certainly teachers, probably will not need Visual Studio, however, Expression studio, Microsoft's web site development suite, might be of interest. This product includes a WYSIWYG web page developer, a presentation builder for Silverlight, a graphics editor, a digital asset and media manager, and encoding software for converting digital media to Silverlight format. Silverlight is Microsoft's answer to Adobe Flash.



The web page builder, which is a replacement for Front Page, shown to the left, has most of the tools any user would need to build even the most complex web sites. It has support for PHP, Silverlight, and supports plug-ins from third-party developers.

Other software available through the DreamSpark project includes Windows Server, Microsoft SQL Server, Robotics Developer Studio, and xna Game Studio, a development platform for building games for the Xbox 360

and the Zune. software engineers have developed tools on their own, Microsoft have put forth a great effort to streamline them for their own use but have also made them available to outside engineers.

To download these product users must first create an account on the DreamSpark site and have their school verified. If the school appears on their lists, downloads can start right away. However, if the school is not listed users are directed to [www.journeyed.com](http://www.journeyed.com), a software

**You will find DreamSpark here:  
[www.dreamspark.com](http://www.dreamspark.com)**

reseller, where they set up an account and "purchase" a no-charge verification. While this is a bit cumbersome, within a few days, an email will be received containing the authorization information.



### Attend NECC – Virtually!

by *Desirée Caskey*

#### Attend NECC – Virtually!

If you are not able to attend NECC in June (Washington DC), there is a way to get a lot of the information without traveling so far. Steve Hargadon from *Classroom 2.0* is working to bring some presentations from *NECC* to you through *EduBloggerCon*. I am sure some of you are saying, “What is NECC, what is Classroom 2.0, AND... what is EduBloggerCon?”

**NECC:** National Educational Computing Conference, is an annual conference for educators who love technology. It is an absolutely amazing event with people attending from all over the world. I was actually fortunate to present one year with a small group of educators from across Montana. You can attend hands-on workshops, teacher-presented workshops, get tons of prizes from vendors, and fill your brain to exploding, with new technology ideas.

**Classroom 2.0** is a social network for educators created with the Web 2.0 tool Ning. When you join this social network, you can get free training via webinars, connect with and collaborate with each other, post discussions, and basically just stay connected with other educators. There are things specifically for people new to technology (newbies) and things for you more seasoned geeks.

An **EduBlog** is a blog that is dedicated to education. If you

have an EduBlog, you are an **EduBlogger**. So, **EduBloggerCon** is a self-coordinated gathering for teachers who blog...that coincides with an ed-tech conference...where you can congregate and learn from each other. There are many EduBloggerCons you can virtually attend. Here is an interesting thing that might confuse those of you that are new to technology lingo...the EduBloggerCon is actually a wiki! What this means is everyone can attend and present...the people who participate are the people that create the content of the EduBloggerCon.

So, how can you virtually attend NECC? First, start by visiting (and then joining) the Classroom 2.0 social network [<http://www.classroom20.com>]. Watch some of the free webinars on NECC, and you will see how to connect to the EduBloggerCon site [<http://www.edubloggercon.com>]. You will be able to virtually attend sessions that are created during the NECC conference. You don't have to “present”, you can just visit the site and see what others are posting.

Don't be afraid to explore this new venue...the idea behind EduBloggerCon is for teachers at every technical level to meet and learn from each other. This is a safe environment to ask questions about all kinds of tools and teaching.

If you are not sure about attending NECC virtually, have no fear; I will be posting to the MCCE blog while I am there. I hope to share some great information with you as I learn.

### Will James 7 Navy Science Class

*(Continued from Page 6)*

epicactus  
dwarf kumquat (2 students)  
arum lily  
Dwarf pummelo  
Beefstake plant  
Brazilian plume  
Citrofortunella sinensis

The students have researched these plants, formulated a hypothesis on the best way to start and care for these plants, written a procedure for getting them started, and composed a materials list for our planting lab (plant adoption party).

Each class will proceed as materials, including plant starts, are assembled.

Other needed items are: general potting soil mix, African

violet soil, cactus potting soil, distilled water (to avoid mineral build up), perlite, and waterproof trays to set plants in. An extra plant rack and grow lights would be wishes to come true, but totally extra!

We could use an extra adult green thumb during lab, too!

Thank you from the bottom of our xylem and phloem for anything with which you can help us!

Mrs. Madden and her 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Scientists

Liz Madden  
Science Department  
Will James Middle School  
Billings, MT 59102  
(406) 651-8542



**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: \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 per year \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 for 3 years

Mail the completed membership form and dues to:

Desireé Caskey  
Lincoln Education Center  
415 N. 30th St.  
Billings, MT 59101