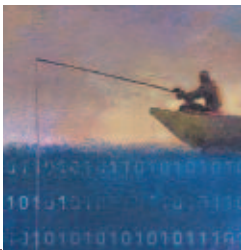
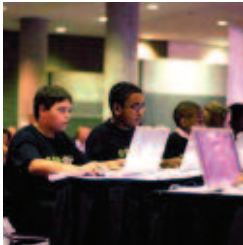


FROM THE EDITOR

The Next Big Thing



Every few months or so, computer and software manufacturers announce the “next big thing,” the product that will revolutionize the way we do business. Thin and portable is in; fat and clunky is out. The claims come just shy of promising that your computer will wash and wax your car for you when it is in sleep mode.

Of course, the next big thing also comes with bugs that must be worked out and updated before the programs and products are stable enough to work for a mass audience. Early adopters have the advantage of getting the new toys ahead of almost everyone, and the disadvantage of being the guinea pigs for everyone else.

For districts on a tight budget, early adoption is a risk. But as Senior Editor Del Stover notes in this month’s story, “The Best Buy,” the smart buy isn’t necessarily the cheapest, either.

In addition to “The Best Buy,” which examines how strategy is just as important as resources in making smart technology purchases, we have two other stories of interest that focus on your use of instructional technology.

In “The e-Volving Textbook,” Senior Editor Naomi Dillon looks at the obstacles districts face in bringing real-time digital content into classrooms. On the surface, it seems like all textbooks

could be online. After all, who wants to read a textbook that says Pluto is still a planet or that Bill Clinton is still president?

Eventually, all digital, all the time may be the way we go. But the cost is prohibitive for many districts now. And regulations at the state level make it difficult for a number of districts trying to make the shift.

The third story, “A New Face for Schools,” talks about that shift, and the move that many of today’s students have made to social networking. In it, author Laura Lefkowitz makes the case for districts embracing social network sites such as Facebook, noting that they provide opportunities for districts and schools to be part of a “purposeful community.”

The time to jump on this fast-moving train is now. Why?

Did you know, for example, that e-mail already is considered passé for most students today? If you’re not texting, then you’re not communicating with the teen world. And if we lose them, we may never get them back.

If we lose them, we will regret it—and so will your students.

Enjoy the stories.

Until next month ...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief