

# OPEN WINDOW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF EDUCATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

Volume 2, Number 2

Fall 1997

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### BECOMING A REALITY

Our recently completed report, *Access for All*, describes the National Library of Education as a new kind of library that is positioned to meet the challenges of the future. We have received many positive comments regarding our report and our proposed efforts. Thanks to all who have voiced their opinion.

We are striving to create a library that is virtual and collaborative, proactive and responsive, and creative and visionary while maintaining the highest standards of customer service.

Since the report's release, we have been working toward making that document a reality.



*Knowledge Is Infinite*

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*Keith Stubbs The Web Guru*

- We are in the planning stages for a U.S. Education Information Network, with an organizational meeting scheduled this fall.
- We have begun plans for a research program in collaboration with the National Research Institute for Post-secondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning.
- We have continued to upgrade our technology with the implementation of a new telephone system and customer service support software in addition to general computer enhancements.
- We are continuing our efforts to manage the Department of Education's Web site.
- We are initiating new projects to handle distribution of all departmental publications and to create a new National Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities.
- We are expanding our publications to include the series *Advances in Education Research*, as well as a new series on meta-analyses of education issues.
- We are developing a collaborative project with several higher education professional associations to create an information service for international students and educators.
- We are preparing to move the Library into the Department's main building early in 1998. For the first time, the National Library of Education will be housed in the Department's headquarters. At that time,



BLANE K. DESSY

all of our collections will become publicly accessible, and our online catalog should be available on the Internet.

Other articles in this issue of *Open Window* describe some of these activities in more detail. I encourage you to read about our efforts and how our services may be of benefit to you.

We are striving to make our Library a preeminent education information service. With your support, I know that we can succeed.

Sincerely,

Blane K. Dessy  
Executive Director

U. S. Department of Education  
Richard W. Riley, Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
Ricky Takai, Acting Assistant Secretary

National Library of Education  
Blane K. Dessy, Executive Director

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Judy Craig, Editor

**N**LE continues to build knowledge as additional research endeavors emerge. New projects include a research synthesis series, an impressive collection of research literature on a set of CD-ROMs, and a periodic compilation of quality research through *Advances in Education Research*.

## RESEARCH SYNTHESSES ON CRITICAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

*by Dr. David Boesel*

**T**he National Library of Education (NLE) is initiating a series of research syntheses on critical issues in American education. Dr. David Boesel, in collaboration with other researchers at the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), will prepare the syntheses.

***The NLE Research Synthesis Series is designed to address the lack of balanced and objective information needed to guide the actions and decisions of researchers, policy makers, teachers, administrators, students, and parents.***

The NLE Research Synthesis Series is designed to address the lack of balanced and objective information needed to guide the actions and decisions of researchers, policy makers, teachers, administrators, students, and parents. Often it is hard to tell what conclusions can be drawn from education research. The Synthesis project will address this need by collecting the empirical literature on critical issues in education, perusing research methods and results, and producing studies that are comprehensive and unbiased.

The first synthesis in the series is a study of the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) test. The study, authored by Dr. David Boesel, Dr. Nabeel Alsalam, and Dr. Thomas Smith, examines a large body of empirical research on the outcomes of GED certification in postsecondary institutions, the labor market, and the military. The performance of people with GEDs is compared with that of other dropouts and high school graduates. The study is expected to be published by early fall.

*For more information, contact Dr. David Boesel at 202-219-1598.*

## ***Advances in Education Research,*** SPRING 1997

*by Judy Craig*

**I**n its role as the nation's collector and creator of education research information, the National Library of Education produces publications such as *Advances in Education Research* to promote recent research findings and disseminate the latest education information. The spring 1997 issue presents seven articles that cover two themes: reading comprehension and subject-area learning. The articles unify these two themes under a central focus: the processes through which students understand, interpret, and use information. To investigate these processes, the researchers employ a variety of approaches, including direct observation, case study analysis, experimental intervention, and research synthesis.

Copies of *Advances in Education Research* may be obtained by contacting the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

## DIGITIZED RESEARCH LITERATURE PROJECT

by Judy Craig and Bob Thomas

**A**s a new service, the National Library of Education is offering a set of 31 disks containing approximately 8,300 ERIC resumes of Research and Development Centers and over 5,000 full-text documents found in the ERIC database of all National Educational Research and Development Centers from 1966 to 1997. These materials, previously available only in microfiche or as paper copies, give educators and researchers access to the latest education information. A search engine will provide quick access to digital images of curriculum and instructional materials.

The Focus Search Scope offers users a variety of search features. A user may search choosing either one or all of the following: document number, clearinghouse number, title of publication, publication type, author, descriptors, identifiers, issue, abstract, and institution.

Users will have an option of either a 16-bit or a 32-bit platform. Disk one will be utilized to reflect future additional information. For convenience, users can minimize the screen, backtrack, and view another disk.

*For more information, contact Bob Thomas at 202-219-1925.*

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## CROSS-SITE INDEXING INITIATIVE

by Donna Timms

**T**he National Library of Education is planning to launch a Cross-Site Indexing Initiative to enhance customer service by providing a search capability across the 140+ public access Web sites on the Internet that are funded by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). A single point of entry to information available on all ED-sponsored Web sites will be offered.

This one-stop shopping approach makes the searching process more efficient and effective. The potential benefits are (1) greater access to key documents and resources of interest without having to know where they reside, (2) reduction of the time expended locating desired documents, and (3) an increased probability of obtaining pertinent data.

When implementation is complete, each ED-funded site will include a query that will give the customer an opportunity to conduct a search across multiple sites, view the results, and retrieve appropriate resources.

The Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) system has been characterized as the foundation of the National Library of Education. While this vision is still being developed, several projects at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology and the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) are providing components to this foundation. The latest projects include the GEM project, the Virtual Reference Desk, and the release of Electronic ERIC Documents online.

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*The Virtual Reference Desk:*

EXPLORING DIGITAL  
REFERENCE SERVICES

*by Judy Craig*

The Virtual Reference Desk is an effort of the National Library of Education (NLE) and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology to explore and support the emerging field of digital reference services. The MAD Scientist Network, Ask Dr. Math, and the NLE's own AskERIC service, all digital reference services, answer thousands of questions each week from the education community. The Virtual Reference Desk will create a common set of resources used to support these services, including training materials, case studies of exemplary digital reference services, and a cross-subject question - answer knowledge base that will capture the information generated by these services. The project is helping to build the Virtual Reference Desk for the emerging "virtual" National Library of Education. For more information, contact David Lankes, Associate Director, ERIC/IT, at 1-800-464-4100 or by e-mail at [rdlankes@ericir.syr.edu](mailto:rdlankes@ericir.syr.edu).

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THE GEM PROJECT: THE GATEWAY TO  
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

*by Judy Craig and David Lankes*

The National Library of Education (NLE) is responding to President Clinton's mandate to ensure that all Americans have the best education in the world. In addition, the NLE Advisory Task Force identified lesson plans and teacher's guides as a top-priority area in which NLE should apply library and information science expertise. Armed with both of these charges, the NLE is spearheading a consortium effort called Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM), which will provide the nation's teachers with one-stop, any-stop access to Internet lesson plans.

There are thousands of lesson plans and other curriculum units in Web and Gopher sites across the Internet. For most teachers, these valuable resources are difficult to find in an efficient, effective manner. The goal of the GEM project is to solve this resource access problem.

According to Michael B. Eisenberg, Director of ERIC/IT, "This project's goal is

to provide a new set of tools to get information into the hands of educators quickly and easily so that children can learn." This effort will create a standard way of describing educational materials and

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***"This project's goal is to provide a new set of tools to get information into the hands of educators quickly and easily so that children can learn."***

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gathering these descriptions into a single catalog. This catalog will create easy access to teaching and learning materials on the net...no matter where they reside.

The first phase ends October 1997. For more information, contact Nancy Morgan, GEM Coordinator, ERIC/IT, at 1-800-464-4100 or by e-mail at [nmorgan@ericir.syr.edu](mailto:nmorgan@ericir.syr.edu).

## NLE'S ONE-STOP REFERENCE SERVICE GETS A TECHNOLOGICAL BOOST

*by E. Stephen Hunt*

### **Toll-Free Number**

The National Library of Education's (NLE's) one-stop reference service for education information includes a toll-free telephone number, 1-800-424-1616. The NLE toll-free number is one of the busiest library call centers in the federal government, handling an average of 200-300 calls per day. Several recent improvements to the 800 number service will make it a more efficient and customer-friendly operation.

NLE has now installed the first phase of a complete upgrade for its 800 number service, including a state-of-the-art Teloquent automated call center system and a customized Lotus Notes software package for customer service data processing. The new systems can handle most foreseeable reference call needs, with a capacity to route over 200 calls simultaneously through approximately 80 separate operators.

### **Teloquent Phone System**

The Teloquent ISDN phone system is supported by two powerful dedicated servers that perform automatic call distribution (ACD) and voice system modulation (VSM). ACD intercepts an incoming call if all lines are busy and automatically queues it in the order received. The caller is informed of how long he or she can expect to be "on queue" and of a menu of options. Selecting any of the options results in an instantaneous call switch to a preset location without the caller having to redial or wait for an operator. VSM controls the tone modulation of the phone line to ensure a clear connection and permit call monitoring. Data on call volume, call origin, and how the call is processed are recorded automatically and continuously. National Library of Education staff are able to log on to the system from their desks for the period they are scheduled to be on call; when they log off, the phone set operates like a regular ISDN telephone.

### **Lotus Notes**

NLE's Lotus Notes, is installed on the desktop computers of reference services staff and permits them to record customer data and how each customer was served while they are on the telephone with a caller. Staff also have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) feature that allows them to enter and share answers they have given to customer inquiries. The FAQ feature can potentially save a great deal of time and frustration in responding to special requests.

In developing these upgrades, NLE closely examined call center operations at other federal libraries and agencies, as well as the missions and functions of the various main 800 numbers within the Department. The 800 number system of the ERIC program was also examined and will become part of the new NLE menu of call options.

### **Staff Training**

National Library of Education (NLE) staff are now being trained to operate the systems. Several refinements are already being planned, including an improved TTY service for hearing-impaired customers, more Teloquent telephone sets for other NLE staff, more sophisticated caller options, and links to other information providers.

*For more information, contact E. Stephen Hunt at 202-219-1882.*

## ONE PUBS PROJECT

*by Judy Craig*

The National Library of Education (NLE), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Educational (ED) Research and Improvement (OERI), is developing a one-stop information products service called One Pubs.

This service center will be responsible for distributing ED's publications and other products such as brochures, CD-ROMs, videotapes, and posters from the entire Department. The purpose of this new center is to support principal offices within ED by providing a full range of mail management, storage, order fulfillment, and distribution services. The Department's and our customers' needs will be served more efficiently by streamlining the Department's distribution process.

Key features of the One Pubs project will be a toll-free number from which customers can request ED publications or products, a searchable database containing ED's informational products, a state-of-the-art inventory system, publications storage, referral capabilities, enhanced mailing list capacity, electronic ordering, and bulk distribution. The emphasis will be placed on one-stop shopping, where most requests would be answered through one telephone call, within a specified period of time, for maximum customer service. The performance-based contract requires that the contractor provide ED with clear, concise monthly reports summarizing product volume by each principal office.

The focus of One Pubs is clearly on customer service, overall efficiency, and cost savings. A cross-agency team is working with the NLE on transitional issues. The new project is expected to be operational by January 1998.

*For more information, contact Jim Clemmens, NLE, at 202-219-2068*

## KEITH STUBBS THE "WEB" GURU

by Judy Craig

**T**he Department's Online Library consistently wins awards as one of the best education resources on the Internet and as one of the finest federal agency Web sites. The site's reputation is the result of Keith Stubbs' direct work and supervision.

### *In the Beginning*

Keith Stubbs joined the Department of Education (ED) in 1976 as a trainee computer programmer. He then served 10 years as a computer specialist developing administrative support and management information systems. During this time, he designed and developed a correspondence control system that was adopted by eight other federal agencies. Keith was consistently an early adopter of new technologies, including database management systems, minicomputers, and PCs.

### *The Move to OERI*

In 1986, he moved to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) to work on electronic dissemination projects. There he was Senior Systems Analyst for 3 years and Branch Chief and Division Director for 7 years. In 1990, Keith received a Special Act Award for designing and developing Edsearch: Education Statistics on Disk, innovative software that provides convenient access to thousands of statistical tables and charts from flagship NCES publications, employing advanced information retrieval, compression, and user

interface techniques. He also launched a project to use electronic networking to promote information sharing among education research and development centers, regional labs, and ERIC Clearinghouses. He decided to base the system on an obscure research network called the Internet.

### *World-Wide Presence*

Keith established the Department's first public presence on the Internet beginning with the ERIC Digest database in 1992 and continuing with the Gopher in October 1993. His pace of hard work continued with the Department's presence on the World Wide Web in March 1994. For most of our readers, the rest is history. In 1995, with the creation of the National Library of Education, he became Director of the Resource Sharing and Cooperation Division. In September of that year, he led the award-winning redesign of the ED Web site. His redesigned site has consistently been rated as one of the top federal and educational sites. The site currently includes all Department offices, and the online library has expanded to over 20,000 files. These files are accessed each month by more than 300,000 computers from all states and sectors of the United States and over 100 countries.

### *And the Beat Goes On*

In 1996, Keith wrote the *U.S. Department of Education World Wide Web Server Standards and Guidelines*. This document was one of the first federal policy documents on Web use. The document rapidly formed the basis for *Federal Web Consortium Guidelines*. It was adopted/adapted by numerous web sites, including federal, state, university, library, international, and digital library project sites. It has also been used as a text for technology courses.

Keith's dedication to excellence has continued as the designer and manager of



KEITH STUBBS

one of the first Internet Customer Surveys (October 1996-January 1997) approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Over 1,500 responses indicated a high degree of satisfaction with ED Internet services.

Keith continues to represent ED on the Federal Web Consortium, a group of 16 federal agencies recognized by Vice President Gore, formed to inform, advance, and coordinate federal use of Web technologies. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Department's Internet Working Group and directs several cross-site indexing, cataloging, and searching projects to help people find the information they seek among the exploding volume of educational materials scattered across thousands of Internet sites.

In his spare time, (when???), Keith is a frequent presenter and panelist at numerous technology conferences. He lives in Great Falls with his wife, Molly, and three horses, a pony, four cats, and a dwarf rabbit. Keith quickly tells you that all of the animals belong to Molly. When asked about his hobbies, it's no surprise that his reply includes, "catching up on e-mail; camping [where there's no e-mail]; and listening to a wide range of music, from Bartok to zydeco."

Born in Washington, DC, educated in District public schools and at Brown University, it's an understatement to say that Keith Stubbs has given this area and the world an enormous amount of his time and effort. The National Library of Education is grateful.

## NEW CLEARINGHOUSE

*by Judy Craig*

**A**nyone needing information regarding the costs of constructing and maintaining education facilities can, for the first time, find national assistance through a new National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities.

The new Clearinghouse will provide information and technical assistance, including the removal of environmental hazards; improvements in air quality; plumbing, lighting, heating, and air conditioning, electrical systems; construction activities needed to meet the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and construction that facilitates the use of modern technologies.

The primary effort of this contract is to provide information and technical assistance on education facilities to elementary and secondary schools, practitioners, decision makers, governing boards, state and local education agencies, and other interested parties. The Clearinghouse will employ a variety of resources and existing programs to gather and disseminate information on innovative and efficient construction technologies and techniques, indoor environmental quality practices, durability, maintenance costs, and energy use, as well as information on how to use energy cost savings to improve facility maintenance.

A contractor will establish a database and Web site of information on educational

facilities issues. The database will also include the latest information on school construction activity across the nation. Each state's school infrastructure financing mechanism will be included in the database. The role of planning for and implementing building improvements that increase schools' safety and technology is critical to the success of this project. The contractor will perform other duties and oversee additional activities that will enhance the productivity of the clearinghouse.

*For more information, contact Jack Lyons, NLE, at 1-800-424-1616.*

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## A NEW GLOBAL EDUCATION MARKETPLACE

*by E. Steven Hunt*

**T**he U.S. Network for Educational Information (USNEI) is a new partnership between federal agencies and private-sector organizations dedicated to improving information services for Americans interested in studies and exchanges abroad and for overseas students, parents, and educators interested in American education.

USNEI functions as a distributed information reference network managed by the National Library of Education, U.S. Department of Education. A major role of USNEI is to serve as the United States' official national education information center (NEIC/ENIC) in cooperation with other such centers overseas.

Current reference partners in the network include the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Information Agency, the American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the College Board (CEEB), the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), the Institute of International Education (IIE), and NAFSA-Association of International Educators. Participating offices within the U.S. Department of Education include the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the Office of

the General Counsel (OGC), and the Office of Interagency and Intergovernmental Affairs (OIIA).

USNEI will coordinate the advisory and reference work of all of its partner organizations. A home page on the World Wide Web will provide accurate and timely information, in user-friendly formats, on American and foreign educational systems, degrees and credentials, and studying or teaching abroad, as well as other resources for further information. Links to foreign and domestic information sources will be provided, as well as to individual institutions.

USNEI is designed deliberately to reflect the diversity and autonomy of the U.S. postsecondary education system and to put the information customer in touch with the correct information provider or decision maker as efficiently as possible.

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## NLE PUBLICATIONS

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The National Library of Education produces a number of free publications available by mail, phone, fax, or e-mail. Among them are the NLE poster, bookmark, and rolodex card. *Fact Sheets* are available on ERIC, the U.S. Department of Education Online Library, the Technology Resources Center, the Legislative Reference Service, the Current Literature Awareness Service (CLAS), Special Collections, and Circulation/Interlibrary Loans. We also have a limited number of copies of *U.S. Department of Education World Wide Web Server Standards and Guidelines*.

To order, write:

*National Library of Education  
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Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20208-5721*

*Phone: (202) 219-1692  
Outside Washington Area call 1-800-424-1616  
Fax: (202) 219-1696  
E-mail: library@inet.ed.gov*

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## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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### Library Administration

*Phone: (202) 219-2289*

*Fax: (202) 219-1970*

### Reference/Research/Statistics

*Phone: (202) 219-1692*

*Outside Washington Area*

*1-800-424-1616*

*Fax: (202) 219-1696*

### Internet HomePage

*http://www.ed.gov/NLE*

### Circulation/Interlibrary loan

*Phone: (202) 219-2238*

### Legislative Reference Service

*Phone: (202) 401-1045*

*Fax: (202) 401-9023*

### Technology Resources Center

*(202) 219-1699*

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*1-800-LET-ERIC*

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Printed on recycled paper.

NLE 97-2001

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20208-5721**

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