

Latest “7 Things...” Briefs from ELI

The EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) has published three new resources in its 7 Things You Should Know About... series.

The “7 Things You Should Know About Data Visualization” brief (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/45258>) explains the concepts and uses of graphical representation of information. Data visualization harnesses infrastructure to find hidden trends that can lead to important discoveries. It also engages students in authentic learning by allowing them to find relevant patterns in data.

The “7 Things You Should Know About Citizen Journalism” brief (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/45746>) explains how this application lets users make free phone

connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/45618) refers to a wide range of activities in which everyday people contribute information or commentary about news events. It compares professional journalism to citizen journalism and explores the potential for citizen journalism to involve students in deeper learning and to complement traditional reporting by adding more personal views of news events.

The “7 Things You Should Know About Skype” brief (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/45746>) explains how this application lets users make free phone

calls between Skype-equipped computers and inexpensive calls between Skype computers and landline or cell phones. Skype allows more frequent contact between colleagues, collaborators, and friends by keeping phone costs down.

The ELI’s “7 Things You Should Know About...” series provides concise information on emerging learning technologies and related practices. Each brief focuses on a single technology or practice and describes what it is, how it works, where it is going, and why it matters to teaching and learning. Browse the full list of 7 Things... briefs at <http://www.educause.edu/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutSeries/7495>.

ECAR Publishes Two New Studies

The EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) has published two new studies, *Service on the Front Line: The IT Help Desk in Higher Education*, by Mark C. Sheehan, and *IT Engagement in Research: A View of Medical School Practice*, by Mark R. Nelson.

The IT Help Desk in Higher Education

Service on the Front Line: The IT Help Desk in Higher Education explores the IT help desk as a complex enterprise operating within a dynamic environment that includes the goals and culture of the central IT organization, the resources and services of the help desk, service level agreements between help desks and their clients, practices for evaluating and improving help desk services, and the perceived success of the help desk organization. Findings are related to the principles and practices of IT service management literature.

The study is based on a literature review to identify issues and establish the research questions, consultation with selected higher education chief information officers, a quantitative

survey of IT administrators at 454 colleges and universities in the EDUCAUSE database, qualitative interviews with 36 executives at 24 institutions, and four case studies about help desk and service management practices at five higher education institutions.

This study is available to ECAR subscribers (<http://www.educause.edu/ECARSubscribingOrganizations/957>) and through purchase. The key findings (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ECAR/ServiceontheFrontLineTheI/45688>) and roadmap (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ECAR/ServiceontheFrontLineTheI/45689>) are publicly available.

A View of Medical School Practice

IT Engagement in Research: A View of Medical School Practice was designed in collaboration with the Association of American Medical Colleges to analyze the practices and perspectives of IT organizations that support the academic research enterprise in medical schools and colleges. As the potential of biotechnology, proteomics, informatics, computational genomics, and other

IT-intensive disciplines continues to offer breakthroughs in medicine, research in these fields requires greater and higher-level technology resources for infrastructure as well as IT support and services.

The study is based on the results of a web-based survey sent to 125 medical schools and colleges in the United States, as well as qualitative interviews with leaders at 10 institutions. Respondents to the survey were predominantly chief information officers or other top administrators from 50 medical institutions, yielding a response rate of 39.7 percent.

The findings contained in this report echo the results of the ECAR 2006 study, *IT Engagement in Research: A Baseline Study*, illustrating that the role and importance of IT in research is growing, while funding and budget decisions remain difficult.

This study is available to ECAR subscribers (<http://www.educause.edu/ECARSubscribingOrganizations/957>) and through purchase. The roadmap (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ECAR/ITEngagementinResearchAVi/45886>) is publicly available.

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Also in the News

EDUCAUSE Announces New Board Members and Officers

EDUCAUSE is pleased to announce that Thomas L. Maier, vice chancellor for information and instructional technology and CIO for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and Carrie E. Regenstein, executive director of computing services at Carnegie Mellon University, will be joining the association's board of directors for four-year terms beginning January 1, 2008.

In addition, at the EDUCAUSE Board of Directors' meeting at the EDUCAUSE 2007 Annual Conference in Seattle, the following officers were elected for one-year terms, also beginning January 1, 2008: Chair David L. Smallen, vice president for information technology at Hamilton College; Vice Chair Lucinda T. Lea, vice president for information technology and CIO at Middle Tennessee State University; Treasurer Scott E. Siddall, an affiliated scholar at Kenyon College; and Secretary Tracy Mitrano, director of information technologies policy and the University Computer Policy and Law Program at Cornell University. Learn more about the new board members at <<http://www.educause.edu/PressReleases/1175&ID=1512>>.

ELI Releases White Paper on Authentic Learning

ELI has released the fourth in a series of four white papers on authentic learning, "Making the Grade: The Role of Assessment in Authentic Learning" (<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/MakingtheGradeTheRoleofAs/45771>), by Marilyn M. Lombardi and edited by Diana G. Oblinger. This paper discusses assessment as an integral component of any successful teaching effort. Research has shown that students engage with subject matter based in part on their expectations about how their achievement will be evaluated. Educators who strive to bring authentic learning experiences to their students must devise appropriate and

meaningful measures to assess student learning and mastery of concepts at hand. Although some barriers must be overcome, numerous examples point to the opportunities available for effective assessment of authentic learning initiatives. These approaches to assessment are vital to ensuring that models of teaching and learning with technology see their full potential.

Core Data Service Survey Launched

Data for fiscal year 2006–2007 are now being collected for the Core Data Service (CDS) database on campus IT environments. Eligible institutions should complete the CDS survey by March 7. Learn more at <http://www.educause.edu/coredata/>, where you can access the service, take a tutorial on using the database tools available, and look at results from previous year's surveys published on the web as annual summary reports.

The web-based database service is not available to the public, corporations, researchers, associations, agencies, or the media. The survey summary report provides aggregated-data summaries and analysis to serve these populations. (Note: the Research in Brief department in this issue of *EQ* provides a short overview of the most recent results, with a pointer to the report posted on the EDUCAUSE website.)

Two New Constituent Groups Form

EDUCAUSE invites subscribers to join two new constituent groups: IT Communications (<http://www.educause.edu/groups/ITCOMM>) and Virtual Worlds (<http://www.educause.edu/groups/VW/>). The IT Communications CG is led by Mur Muchane, Davidson College, and Lisa Trubitt, University at Albany, SUNY. The Virtual Worlds CG is led by AJ Kelton, Montclair State University. Browse the full list of constituent and discussion groups at <http://www.educause.edu/cg>.

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