Tech Talk

Online Discussion Groups
A new method of communication

The OLRC web site <**literacy.kent.edu**> currently hosts six online Discussion Groups. Unlike listservs, users do not need their own personal email address or Internet connection in order to join in discussions. The groups are entirely web-based and may be accessed and posted to from any Internet-connected computer – home, work, library, friend's computer, etc.

The following Discussion Groups are currently available:

- **Ohio Technology Issues** - Discussion focuses on technology issues and concerns in Ohio adult education.
- **Ohio Students** - For adult students in Ohio to discuss technology issues and concerns.
- **Midwest LINCS** - Discussion groups for members of the NIFL Midwest LINCS Technology Hub.
- **Conferences & Workshops** - Areas for posting upcoming events and discuss workshops/conferences that have been attended. Includes an area for carpooling/sharing rides to professional events.
- **Family Literacy** - Discussion groups for family literacy practitioners in Ohio
- **Workplace Education** - Discussion groups for workplace education (in conjunction with the Northwest ABLE Resource Center)

Discussion Groups may be accessed from the main OLRC page at <**literacy.kent.edu**> and by clicking on "OLRC Discussion Groups" at the lower right-hand corner of that page. Each Discussion Group has a link to an online manual which provides tutorials on using the Groups and has answers to frequently-asked questions.

New OLRC Staff Member!

Kimberly McCoy is the newest addition to the OLRC – she joined us in early February as a Technical Assistant. Kim has a B.S. in Elementary Education from Florida A&M University and an M.A. in Educational Technology from the University of Northern Iowa. She was born and raised in Cleveland and recently returned after completing her Masters.

Because of her strong educational background, Kim has been working on producing web-based lessons plans and other training materials for use in the field. She is also an experienced Mac user and is quickly learning the in's and out's of computer hardware. Aside from all this education and ability, Kim also has a sense of humor, a great personality, and is very patient and easy-going.

Kim has taken over the management of the Technical Assistance/Training Network; if your ABLE program is interested in receiving **no-cost, on-site** technical support and training, please let Kim know! She is also available for technical support questions and will be doing conference presentations and regional trainings – she may be reached at (800) 765-2897 ext. 27, (330) 672-2007 ext. 27, or **kmccoy@literacy.kent.edu**.

Be sure to stop by the Technology Rooms at OAACE and the Spring Directors Meeting to meet Kim!

Have you seen any `Cookies`
on your computer?

I am not talking about those cookies from The Original Cookie Company, Mrs. Fields Cookies, or even The American Cookie Company. I am talking about a small piece of text that many web sites and browsers are using.

What are Cookies?

Cookie files are new technical devices that have the capability of storing and reading back information that they place on your hard drive to determine if you have been at a particular site before. You might be thinking, "Why would a site and/or browser care if I have been there before? " Several companies that use cookie files have stated they benefit and save time for the Internet user.

According to Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer, cookie files are used to determine if a user reads the text that is provided on the site as well as meeting the interest of the user. Cookie files are mainly for marketing and tracking purposes. To illustrate, when a user visits a site, the cookie files are used to store information that the user voluntarily supplies for future purchases or interests the user might have, somewhat of a resource base for the consumer.

Cookie files cannot retrieve personal information such as your name and/or electronic mail address without you providing them in your browser preferences. Cookie files can determine if a certain computer has visited a particular web site before, but cannot read information that is already stored on your hard drive. Some sites use cookie files to track and monitor users' activity on the Web, such as the sites visited and length of visit.

If you use Netscape Navigator or Microsoft's Internet Explorer browsers you can set your preferences to warn you before sites put cookie files on your hard drive. To set your preferences for Netscape Navigator 4.0 go to **Edit** in your menu bar, select **Preferences,** and then **advanced**. Find the section titled **cookies**. In this section the user can select any option listed below:

- Accept all cookies (*Permitting cookie files to placed on your hard drive*)
- Accept only cookies that get sent back to the originating server (*Destroy cookie files that are transferred from other servers*)
- Disable cookies (*Disconnect the transfer of cookie data*)
- Warn me before accepting a cookie (*Warn the user before accepting a cookie*).

To set your preferences for Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 go to **View** in the menu bar, select **Internet options**, **advanced,** and then **scroll down** to the cookie section. At this point the user can select any of the options listed below.

- Prompt before accepting cookies (*Warn the user before accepting a cookie*)
- Disable all cookie use (*Doesn't want cookies to be placed on the computer*)
- Always accept cookies (*Doesn't require a warning before accepting cookie files*)

If you are using older versions of Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer you can only set your preferences to prompt you to accept cookies or not accept cookies.

Users can also locate and delete cookie files and/or folders that have already been placed on their hard drive. Depending on whether you are using a Macintosh or PC this process may vary. Locate the command that allows you to find files and folders on your hard drive. Type either cookie, cookie*, or cookie*.* (*Note * = wildcards, represents any letter or character*) in the name and location part of the find/finder section of the computer. If your system has multiple hard drives, search all the drives. Once the cookie files have been located, they can be deleted like any other file and/or folder.

Do not worry. You cannot have more than 300 cookie files on your hard drive. If you receive 301, the oldest one will be deleted. One particular web site or advertisement cannot send more than 20 cookie files. Some, but not all, cookie files have an expiration date. The cookie file without an expiration date is supposed to be deleted once the user exits out of that specific site and/or browser.

For additional information on cookies:

- Cowichan, Lake. (1998). Frequently asked questions …What are Cookies and Viruses? URL
- <**http://uni3sys.unipharm.com/InPHARMation/vol2-no2/virus-cookie-faq.html**>
- Gimon, A. Charles. (1997). How the Cookie Crumbles. URL <**http://www.info-nation.com/ cookie.html**>
- Colonial State Banks. (1997). Cookies what are they? URL <**http://www.colonial.com.au/ usingthenet/cookies.asp**>
- Microsoft Corporation. (1998). What is a cookie? URL<**http://www.microsoft.com/misc/cookie.htm**>
- Netscape. (1998). Cookies and Frequently Asked Questions. URL<**http://www.netscape.com/assist/ security/faqs/cookies.html# why_useful**>

WEB SITES TO EXPLORE

· **Web Reviews**

The Magellan Internet Guide has stars in the upper right-hand corners that indicate how the Guide has rated a particular web site. The Magellan Internet Guide at <**http://www.mckinley.com/magellan/ Reviews/Education/Adult_Education/index.magellan.html**> features Adult Educational sites that have been reviewed and evaluated. Adult educators can also submit a site they would like evaluated in the near future.

The Adult Education Teacher's Annotated Webliography is a wonderful site that has many ideas and resources that have been developed by Adult Educators, for Adult Educators. This annotated webliography at <**http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/mbcweishome.html**> gives information on Student and Teacher Resources, Project Based Learning, GED sites/activities, Grant Information, English as a Second Language (ESL), as well as other sites that Adult Educators might find interesting.

· **Search the Online Educator's Archive**

Are you looking for a certain subject matter in a particular grade level on the Internet? If so, the **Online Educator** is an excellent place to collect educational resources from the web. First, go to <**http://ole.net/ ole/**> next, scroll down the page to the "Search the archive" section, check the particular grade level you might be interested in and lastly, enter the subject matter you would like to locate information on.

· **Literacy/Adult Education Sites**

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education <**http://www.albany.edu/aaace/**> has a fabulous web site that provides resource links to various items that would be of interest to adult educators, tutors, volunteers, and students. These links include information pertaining to adult education issues/ concerns, conferences, and adult education publications.

In order to enhance adult literacy and life long learning, **The Center for Literacy Studies** sponsored by The University of Tennessee, Knoxville <**http://www.coe.utk.edu/literacy/default.html**> has created a web site that includes literacy resources, curriculum information, and staff development.

The bookspot web page is a great way for parents and children to start enhancing their reading skills while incorporating technology. **The best of book reviews, bookstores, reading lists and more** at **<http://www.bookspot.com/>** offers links to book reviews, children's books, electronic books, and the best places to buy books.

The Family Literacy Corner has developed an On-line magazine project for parents and children. **Parents and Children Together Online** at <**http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/pcto/menu.html** > is a great way to incorporate technology and family literacy.

· ## English Spoken as a Second Language (ESL)

Dave's ESL Café <**http://eslcafe.com/**> on the Web is a remarkable web site for any one who is interested in ESL. Dave's ESL Café provides a discussion group and help center for students and educators. Some of the topics in the discussion group deal with Adult Education, Activities/Games, and Elementary Education. The Help center is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Before posting, it is probably a good idea to view previous postings and responses that have been submitted by others seeking help. This web site has everything an ESL educator could possibility want and then some.

The Adult Education ESL Teachers Guide located at <**http://humanities.byu.edu/ELC/Teacher/TeacherGuideMain**> is an on-line manual that provides assistance to beginning as well as the advanced ESL Adult Educators such as lesson plans, teaching strategies, and resources for working with ESL students.

The English as a Second Language Resource Page at <**http://www.ualberta.ca/~pke/EDPSY597/PROJECT/RESOURCE.htm**> is a great site for ESL educators. This site provides detailed information on using the Internet as a resource base, lesson plans for lab activities, and grammar quizzes for ESL students.

· ## Volunteer Information

Want to get the community involved in your ABE/ABLE program? **The System for Adult Basic Education Support** has offered an on-line article entitled: "Inviting the Community into Your ABE Program" located at **<http://www.sabes.org/b2judym.htm>.** This article provides essential tips and suggestions that will help with getting the community involved in your ABE/ABLE program.

A discussion forum has been started for adult literacy volunteers at **<http://www.rightstep.org/boards/littutor/index.html**>. The **volunteers for adult literacy** allows volunteer tutors to discuss issues and ideas dealing with adult basic/literacy education. This forum provides a marvelous chance for adult literacy tutors to share and express ideas dealing with adult education/literacy concerns.

Are you having trouble with creating, organizing, and/or supervising an effective volunteer group at your program? If so, **Energize, Inc.** located at **<http://www.energizeinc.com/welcome.html>** has the solution to your problems. This web site is dedicated to providing information dealing with volunteerism such as books, articles, training, and techniques that are essential when working and overseeing volunteers.

· ## Citizenship Information

Acquiring US Citizenship at <**http://www.accent.net/advocate/aus7.htm**> is an excellent web site to visit if you or someone in your program is interested in the process of becoming a US citizen.