

## Teachers and Technology

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It would be a rare educator who has not been introduced to the recent wave of **educational technology**. Virtually, every education related journal, course, and resource has some information related to using computers and technology for state-of-the-art teaching in educational environments at all levels. Greeted by some with open arms, technology also raises alarm bells in some educators for a variety of reasons. Some are concerned that teachers will be replaced with computers. Others have an aversion to technology in general while others have little time to master the skills necessary to even use a computer, let alone design a course or lessons on one.



### The Wave is Unstoppable

[The Future of Network Technology for Learning](#) provides white papers and reports addressing the key issues and initiatives that dominate the arena of educational technology. As with any big change, the advent of educational technology has introduced a slow but steady growth of a new **educational paradigm**. The Internet has widened the impact of this paradigm shift in education, virtually making a "**global classroom**" a very plausible potentiality. Students can interact and collaborate with other students in different schools, different cities, different countries and even different continents.

[The Reference Desk](#) from Martindale's offers an astounding directory of educational websites and learning experiences for faculty and students alike. These opportunities have catalyzed a strong trend in education for **technologically skilled faculty** to both widen the scope of what they can offer students and to help make the learning experience an interesting and important event in the teaching process.

Each educator has a unique set of skills and body of knowledge and theory which are used routinely in the education process. When it comes to technological skills, how do you fare?

## How Do You Fare?

Learning to use computers from scratch, can be a daunting task for novices. It is important to take it slow, and develop your knowledge and skill at a comfortable pace. An excellent resource for getting acquainted with educational technology is at [eTeaching Institute](#). With the latest computers available, this **orientation process** can be done quite painlessly - it just takes time and dedication.

A good place to start is to take an inventory of the **computer applications** that you feel the most comfortable working with; which ones you know nothing about, and need intensive tutoring to master; and which ones would be the most useful to your **teaching style** and discipline of study. Some potential applications to learn in order to teach in a progressive manner include:

- Word-processing
- Databases
- Spreadsheets
- Graphics programs
- Desktop publishing
- E-mail
- World Wide Web browsing
- Chat rooms
- Discussion lists and message boards
- Computer assisted instruction packages
- Multiuser dimensions (MUDs)
- Multiuser dimensions, object-oriented (MOOs)
- Java scripting
- Webpage design
- Multimedia presentations
- Virtual reality environments



## Help Is At Hand

A free on-line course for beginner **Internet skills** is offered at [Tonic from Netskills](#) hosted by the University of Newcastle in the U.K. An active online community of teachers and academics is available through [Learning Times Net](#) featuring cutting edge dialogue and innovation. Another excellent community with a weekly helpful newsletter is offered at [Teach-nology](#). Kevin Kruse, known as the [E-learning Guru](#), offers a practical, easy to understand newsletter, articles and toolbox aimed to help educators learn to use the online environment in their teaching.

A comprehensive [Web Based Learning Resource Libray](#) is available for further exploration. Robert Jackson created the site to informally catalog (and occasionally compare, contrast and editorialize on) the tools, topics and issues of interest to those developing for web-based learning initiatives, especially in higher education. Another interesting community at [River Within](#) provides resources, a newsletter and dialogue for online educators. One of the best way to develop your skills in online education IS to dialogue and engage with others - the latest technologies make this possible from the comfort of your

own home or office. It isn't easy, but learning to add technology to your repertoire of teaching skills is well worth the effort. It can help you in your teaching plans and preparation, in organizing grades and assessments, and in the actual provision of regular learning experiences. Technology in education is here to stay - why not put it to good use?