

NECC 2003 • Seattle, WA • June 28 – July 3, 2003

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Summary of Report

I have just returned from the NECC 2003 (National Educational Computing Conference) sponsored by ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). It was held in Seattle from June 28 – July 3, and registered 17,000 participants from 50 different countries, 350 exhibitors, 175 workshops, 350 one-hour concurrent sessions, 60 web-poster and 60 poster sessions, 30 Global Gallery presentations (international), 15 Student Showcase Sessions, 15 Make-and-Take Sessions, 4 Keynote speakers, and additional forums and sponsor activities. It was my privilege and honor to be one of the presenters in the Global Gallery at this year's conference.



Overall, what impressed me the most is the current impact of Palm handheld computers in the classroom and how many school districts have already begun using complete class sets of these computers. It was interesting to me that many of these school districts are not in wealthy areas, and not funding their acquisition of handheld computers through tax-payer money. Rather, it seemed that they are very skilled at applying for grants, forming partnerships, being model schools, etc. Also interesting was that the use of handheld technology, integrated into all subject areas, seemed to be demonstrated from all parts of the country – Georgia, Montana, Arizona – but not as much in the Northeast.

The report that I created on my experiences at the conference is 33 pages long. It is not meant to be read from beginning to end, but rather to serve as a resource of information. In addition to my notes from the main Keynote Address, and from a few of the sessions I attended (which can be skipped over if not a topic of interest), I highlighted about 30 sessions at the end of the report – with links to the presentation slides, hand-outs, and/or web sites for most of those sessions. If one of those topics is of interest to you, the links may either provide you with more information, or a way to get more information.

I also included a great deal of information on the Palm Handheld computers, as well as links to excellent articles on the use of handheld computers in school, and to a wide variety of educational applications and management tools that can be used with the Palm Handheld Computer. Even if you don't have an interest in handheld computers, I recommend that you browse through the information, visit some of the links (p. 6-11), take a look at one of the slide shows on page 7, and look twice where there is a * (my symbol for a recommendation from myself or another presenter). I had had zero interest in handhelds before this conference. I'd never even held one! To me, they were simply a glorified address book or "to do" list. I couldn't believe how wrong I was!

To view the report, please visit: <http://pec.jun.alaska.edu/camp/necc2003/report.pdf> or click [here](#).

On a personal note, the energy and excitement at the conference was infectious – and I find myself recharged for teaching and learning! I am looking forward to having a “higher tech” classroom this next year in two different ways:

1. Using a Palm Handheld computer, in association with my desktop, to record grades (even from rubrics), behavior, and maybe even lesson plans.
2. Using a Tablet PC with a projector – to partially replace the chalkboard and whiteboard. (A Tablet PC is a cross between a laptop and a handheld computer or “Pocket PC.” By turning the screen 180 degrees and then folding it over the keyboard, it becomes like a pad of paper that can be written on with a special pen. One example: a story penned by a student (or a student’s drawing, or a worksheet) could be scanned into the computer (or turned into a picture by a digital camera), and projected onto the screen. With the Tablet PC, one could then write freehand on top of the scanned material. In this way, a student’s work could be used for demonstration with lessons on editing, figurative language, prepositional phrases, etc.

(Some classrooms across the country are piloting the use of Tablet PCs by all students. An advantage over the laptop is that the students can write with a pen rather than type. One can either choose to save their work in its freehand form, or to convert it to text. While the handwriting recognition is quite advanced, it would definitely provide some motivation for the student to write neatly enough to have his/her handwriting recognized!)

I am particularly impressed with the management tools for education created by Media-X. I see potential for having a greater flow of information and connectedness between teachers and administration (and possibly parents) in regards to student achievement, behaviors, identification information, and report cards. Learner Profile 3.0, by Houghton Mifflin, also looks worth considering (have demo available).

Next year’s conference is in New Orleans!

Caryn Camp

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