



Distance learning

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

For many students in North America and around the world, getting even a basic education is difficult. Teacher shortages and insufficient access to transportation are just two of the challenges that hamper students' progress. This issue of the newsletter concentrates on how these difficulties can be overcome. In our Feature Article, read how a school in Auburn, Alabama, is using SMART products to collaborate with students across the country. Our Product Spotlight highlights Bridgit™ conferencing software, a distance learning solution for students and educators, and an example on [page 6](#) shows how a school in Maryland is using the software to remedy their teacher shortage problem.

Don't forget you still have time to [provide your feedback](#) on the newsletter through our reader survey. If you fill it out before March 31, you'll be entered to win a SMART Board™ 600i interactive whiteboard system.

NANCY'S NOTES

Not-so-distant education



Back in the '80s and '90s, a lot of experimentation was going on with distance education. Universities and colleges were catering to students who were often working full time and who needed to upgrade their education through additional courses. These pioneer students would work all day and then take classes at night.

SMART was involved with one program that showed incredible results – the students at connected remote locations routinely performed better on tests than the students in the physical classroom. Before we got all excited over what this could mean about the future of distance

education, we had to keep in mind that the remote students were older and more motivated than the students living the good life on campus.

Nonetheless, data conferencing has become a proven technological solution to many of the challenges that stand between students and learning.

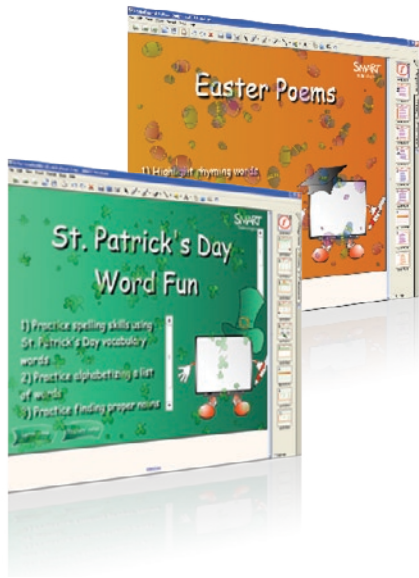
Today, distance education has rapidly moved from postsecondary education to K-12 and is a viable solution to the teacher-shortage problem. Picture a teacher instructing in one class, with assistants in various connected classrooms. Think also about the shortage of fully qualified math and science teachers. How about the possibility of putting the best physics teacher in front of all of the tenth-grade students in a whole district to help them learn to love the science? Then picture some remote communities where distance education offers local students the same opportunities as their big-city counterparts with all the optional courses they have available to them.

Distance education isn't something that's coming soon. It's here now, and it presents some great opportunities for alternate solutions to some real problems. You don't have to have issues of sparsity and distance to make it an appealing option.

[Nancy Knowlton](#) is the CEO of SMART Technologies.

CLASSROOM CONTENT

Notebook™ software lesson activities



Find hundreds of high-quality K–12 lesson activities on the [education solutions website](#). Each lesson is correlated to local curriculum standards and created by classroom teachers or SMART's team of curriculum resource developers.

We've highlighted new St. Patrick's Day and Easter lesson activities that can be found on the website. There is also a popular science lesson activity for your secondary students.

Easter Poems

K–3 language arts students can read poems together, highlight the rhyming words and complete a cloze activity on the poems.

St. Patrick's Day Word Fun

Language arts students in grades 4–6 can work through spelling and vocabulary activities that have a St. Patrick's Day theme.

Respiration

Science students in grades 10–12 can learn the differences between and equations for aerobic and anaerobic respiration. This lesson activity also contains questions that integrate with the Senteo™ interactive response system.

NEWS

SMART document camera

If you visited our booth at the Texas Computer Education Association's (TCEA) annual conference last month, you may have seen the SMART document camera, the latest addition to our 21st-century classroom solution.

With this new presentation tool, you can do the following:

- Record and project three-dimensional objects right onto your SMART Board interactive whiteboard, enabling your students to see the objects in vivid detail
- Write over images and capture stills directly into Notebook software or any application you're using
- Use the document camera's zoom features to examine sharp, detailed close-ups of even the smallest microscopic features



If you're attending any of the following trade shows, drop by the SMART booth to meet our staff, check out our newest products and see firsthand how the SMART document camera's real-time visual displays will help to enrich your lessons, engage students and encourage classroom participation.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

ASCD conference
March 15–17, 2008
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana
Visit us at booth 1503

National Science Teachers Association

NSTA conference
March 27–30, 2008
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center
Boston, Massachusetts
Visit us at booth 2254

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

NCTM conference
April 9–12, 2008
Salt Palace Convention Center
Salt Lake City, Utah
Visit us at booth 2535

NEWS

Share your videos with SMART

SMART has launched a YouTube channel, and we'd like to invite you to submit your videos to the collection. A single destination for SMART-related videos created by teachers and SMART staff, this channel gives you access to a multitude of resources, from tips and tricks to real classroom stories. To view the videos, visit <http://youtube.com/smarttechvideos>.

If you have a video you'd like to add to the compilation, visit the [SMART Exchange](#) to read the submission guidelines.

A winner for every state and province

We're giving away 63 one-year school subscriptions to the SMART Learning Marketplace, and you could be a winner!

Each subscription provides access to a 6,000 MB account that is available from April 15, 2008, to April 16, 2009. A school subscription enables an unlimited number of users to share access to digital content so they can download images, manipulatives, audio files and video clips.

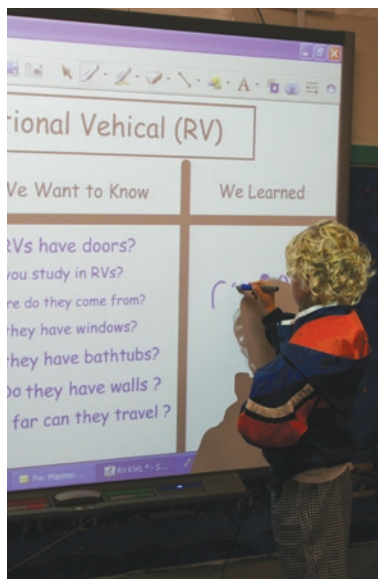
A winner from every state and province will be chosen. For full contest details, please read the contest [terms and conditions](#). The contest ends on March 28, 2008, so [enter now](#).

FEATURE ARTICLE

Going the distance

"The world is shrinking every day, so let's prepare our children for it. That's the really cool aspect of distance education – technology like SMART's Bridgit software lets students step outside to see a far bigger world ... and it lets them interact with it," says Sandy Armstrong, an instructional technology coach with Auburn City School District in Auburn, Alabama.

As Armstrong well knows, SMART's Bridgit conferencing software, coupled with SMART Board interactive whiteboards, can link classrooms across the hall, across the state, on the other side of the country, or indeed, the globe. Such is the case at the Auburn Early Education Center, where Armstrong works with kindergarten teachers as a technology coach. [Read the full article.](#)



CLASSROOM CONTENT

SMART-accredited software



The [SMART Software Accreditation Program](#) includes 170 multimedia content and software titles from 60 companies.

The program recognizes content and software based on their level of compatibility with SMART Board interactive whiteboards and Sympodium™ interactive pen displays.

Consider these new SMART-accredited software titles for your next lessons:

[One More Story](#) is an online library of the best of children's classic and contemporary books for pre- and early-readers. Through a simple point-and-click process, students can choose a book, see its illustrations and have it read to them whenever they want. The *I Can Read It* mode offers support for children reading the story on their own.

[Stagecast Creator](#) gives secondary teachers and students the power to create interactive simulations that include models, games and stories in all subject categories for students who have a wide variety of learning styles.

SMART Learning Marketplace update



Thank you for making the SMART Learning Marketplace a success! Over 6,000 educators are using the Marketplace to access to more than one million digital learning resources.

We're striving to make the Marketplace even better with your valuable feedback, and if you're a member of the Marketplace, you can now look forward to a couple of new features:

- Improved content search options
- Enhanced image previews

Further updates over the summer will include

- New publishers – Awen, eChalk, Learning Connections, E-SWOTS, Dunelm e-Learning, F1 and JSH Education
- Content correlated to curriculum standards
- Previews of audio, video and manipulatives
- SMART-created lesson activities
- Senteo question sets

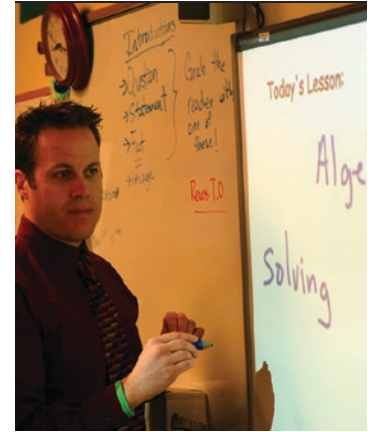
Sign up today to access images, video clips, audio files, manipulates and text documents from some of the world's leading education publishers.

Empowering teachers and students in Oswego

Students in Tom Wiegand's fifth-grade

algebra class erupt in cheers when their teacher turns on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard and pulls up a lesson activity in Notebook software. For the next hour, Wiegand's students are riveted as they interact with various elements of the lesson. But it wasn't always this way.

Wiegand, who teaches at [Oswego City School District](#) in Oswego, New York, was having a difficult time getting his students interested in algebra. Now, with his SMART Board interactive whiteboard, he finds it easy. "I use every feature in Notebook software for this lesson, which makes it very interactive for the students," says Wiegand. "My students are completely engaged and excited about what they are learning, seeing, interacting with and hearing. Having the SMART Board interactive whiteboard has transformed my teaching and allowed me to go to the next level. I can't imagine teaching now without one!"



Looking back

Wiegand can thank Cathy Chamberlain, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction at Oswego, for his SMART product. In April of last year, Chamberlain was consulting in a Minneapolis school district that was in the process of implementing SMART Board interactive whiteboards into every classroom, and she was amazed at what she saw. "The intrigue and magnetism that I saw when I walked into those classrooms was absolutely phenomenal, and at that moment I knew we had to replicate that at Oswego," says Chamberlain. Administrators immediately began securing multiple grants to purchase as many SMART Board interactive whiteboards as they could.

This school year, Oswego City School District outfitted more than 160 SMART Board interactive whiteboards in their seven schools, giving them a total of 170. Over the next three years, they plan to implement an additional 40-50, so that every classroom will have one.

The effects are felt all around

Even at the elementary level, the interactive whiteboards are captivating students. Tom Finnerty, Oswego's technology staff development specialist, was observing a second-grade classroom, and he was astonished when the students voted to give up their play time to use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. "The kids sat perfectly behaved and waited their turn. It's remarkable to see how excited they are to use it and the affect it has on them," Finnerty explains.

Students aren't the only ones who love using the boards. "SMART Board interactive whiteboards have rejuvenated a lot of teachers' careers, and they've created this new excitement to come to school every day," says Finnerty. "Even the veteran teachers that are nearing retirement have embraced the technology and want to learn more."

Oswego is the first SMART Showcase District in New York State and eighth in North America. For more information on how SMART products are impacting teaching and learning at this school or to look up any of the 100-plus Showcase Schools, visit www.education.smarttech.com/showcase.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Bridgit conferencing software



Imagine being able to create a powerful distance learning environment for your students. Picture your class collaborating on a project with students in another city or country. What if you had real-time access to an archaeologist, a zoologist or a museum curator? How would it feel to deliver lessons to a child in the hospital – right from your PC, SMART Board interactive whiteboard or Sympodium interactive pen display?

Bridgit software 3.3 is a distance learning solution that allows you to accomplish all of these things and more. You can instantly connect with students and educators anywhere in the world – your teaching is no longer confined within your classroom walls.

The software provides a quick, effective and affordable way for your students to interact with lessons and other course materials that may otherwise be unobtainable. You and your students can share desktops and webcam images, communicate in real time using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), send chat messages or write notes in digital ink for everyone to see.

How does it work?

Follow the three easy steps below to connect with participants, whether they're down the hall or across the globe.

1. Open the software and assign your lesson a name and a password
2. Enter the e-mail addresses of the educators and students that will be participating, and click on the Send Invite button
3. Once everyone has joined, you're ready to begin sharing voice, video and data in a secure and reliable environment

Quick facts



- Save long-distance costs by using VoIP to deliver instruction over the Internet
- Use webcam support for up to four sites, and watch the interaction between your participants
- Connect quickly to any student or teacher with Internet access
- Share desktops easily
- Write over desktops and highlight information
- Chat with individual students or the whole group
- Supports the latest versions of Windows® and Mac OS operating systems

Did you know?

If you are using a Web-conferencing product, it is advisable to keep presentation screens simple and uncluttered with a white background. When there is less data that has to go down the pipe, you are able to receive truer real-time feedback.

Visit our website for a free **30-day trial**, or call SMART's software sales team at 1.866.284.2769.

If you're already using Bridgit software, **upgrade now to version 3.3** for free.

Countdown to Notebook software 10



Themes

With this new feature, you can create a theme for your Notebook software lesson activity. Set your design properties like font, background color and images, and apply them to one or all of your Notebook pages.

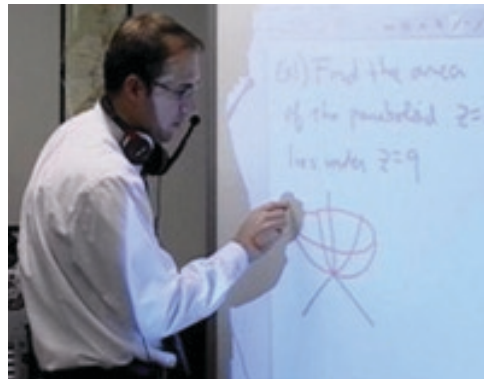
In your classroom, you can immerse your students in a lesson on the Roman Empire, for example, with a themed page template featuring maps, architecture and statues from that period.

Visit the [Downloads](#) section in SMART Exchange to view quick videos that show you step by step how to use the Notebook software 10 features that have already been revealed in previous issues of the newsletter.

Up next

Keep an eye out for the April edition focused on Notebook software 10. In this special issue, you'll find tips to help you get the most out of the software, and we'll keep you updated on the new Lesson Activity Toolkit and the next phases of the SMART Exchange and the Teachers' Hub.

A district's perspective



Teaching without borders

High school math teacher, Josh Dorsey, teaches his Calculus III students using Bridgit conferencing software, regardless of whether he is in his classroom, a hotel room or at home. With his computer and an Internet connection, Dorsey can teach from anywhere and his students at Anne Arundel County Public School District in Maryland never need to miss a class.

Bridging the distance

Prior to using Bridgit software, additional teachers were hired to travel around the county and deliver instruction to individual or small groups of students that were unable to register for a full calculus or algebra classroom. Administrators at the Anne Arundel County mathematics office realized that this was a costly and ineffective use of their resources and that they needed to find another alternative.

Two years ago, they made the decision to implement Bridgit software to remotely deliver instruction to all students across the county. Today, Dorsey is one of three math teachers whose lessons are taught using a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and broadcast to other schools using Bridgit software. The results they are achieving are remarkable, and county administrators are happy to find a solution that uses human resources more effectively and brings a higher number of students into one shared learning environment.

The software is not only enabling Dorsey to continue teaching remotely, but it's also helping his students when they can't make it to class. "I really like Bridgit software because I can log on from anywhere," says Benjamin Warner, one of Dorsey's students. "Even if I have to be away from school, I can still connect to my calculus class and not miss a lecture."

Val Emrich, Anne Arundel's district instructional technology manager, calculates that in their first year of implementing Bridgit software, the district saved over US\$130,000 compared to hiring additional teachers. Emrich believes the district will only continue to save money as their initial investments in technology and software will provide many years of use.