
Press Release

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Melrose, MA and Hampton Bays, NY

Education study finds lower cost ways to bring schools and homes into the digital age.

The EPIE Institute and the Center for Information, Technology & Society announce the release of their one year study on K-12 education networking funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation of Chicago.

The report was written to help school and community technology planners and policymakers make better decisions about "wiring schools," connecting to the Internet, and connecting homes to schools.

Dr. W. Curtiss Priest, co-author of the report said, "There is so much hype about the Internet, schools don't know what is expected of them. Parents worry about what the new technology may do to their kid's learning and lead teachers find themselves in conflict with school administrators."

P. Kenneth Komoski, co-author of the report said, "We live in a country of some 100 million households, roughly a third of which contain the parents of 50 million school-age children who spend 180 days each year attending the nation's 85 thousand K-12 public and 15 thousand private schools. During 1995, for the first time since the appearance of home computers in the late 1970s, millions of parents of school-age children emerged as the driving force of home-computer sales. It is also interesting to note that although the majority of these parents agree that schools are doing well by their children, they feel that they 'must supplement what the school teaches.'"

Significant findings:

- The digital video disc (DVD) which holds 18 gigabytes of information may radically change how schools connect to information. With many concerned about letting children wander about the Internet, the best materials from the Internet can be placed on the low-cost DVD disc. Telecommunication costs would be substantially reduced.
- 81% of a student's time is spent outside of the classroom. If we are to improve learning in this country we need to provide meaningful learning activities that take advantage this time.
- There are 10-13 million computers discarded by businesses each year. Today, many such machines are powerful enough to run current educational software and Internet navigation tools. Instead of many of these being shipped overseas they should be made part of programs that let low-income families who can't afford a home computer for their child to earn these computers by learning to use them and helping others.
- The most meaningful Internet-based activity for students is the structured "telecollaborative project." In these projects students learn to work with other students and share information and knowledge they are producing.
- Telephone voice messaging systems are the most advanced forms of school networking by providing ways of contacting parents and providing information about their child's work.

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Review copies of the study are available. The report is available to the public for \$9 from EPIE
Institute, 103-3 W. Montauk Highway, Hampton Bays, New York 11946. The Macintosh
version is at <http://www.cosn.org/EPIE.html>