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Special points of interest:

- **ICE Conference information**
- **RICE/ICE Membership information**
- **2007 Products**
- **Podcast contest**
- **Digital Divide**

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The Digital Divide

The digital divide is most commonly defined as the gap between those individuals and communities that have, and do not have, access to the information technologies that are transforming our lives. In February 2002, the U.S. Department of Commerce released ["A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet,"](#) the latest study on computer and Internet use in America. Formerly a national benchmark for measuring disparities in access, the implied message of this latest release is that the digital divide is no longer a major concern. Many organizations feel differently, and as the debate intensifies, we are asking after ten years of national leadership to address the issue, "Where are we?"

"A Nation Online" pointed to U.S. Census data showing that 143 million Americans, or about 54 percent of the population, are using the Internet. It also reported that the rate of growth of Internet use in the United States is currently 2 million new Internet users per month, with Internet use continuing to increase across income, education, age, race, ethnicity, and gender lines.

This is all good news, and a testament, in part, to the effectiveness of several federally funded programs such as the [E-Rate](#), or telecommunications discounts to schools and libraries, the [Technology Opportunities Program](#) (TOP) and the Community Technology Centers Program (CTC). The CTC program provides matching grants that leverage state, local, and other resources to create and improve technology access and training facilities. The TOP program provides matching grants for projects that use technology in innovative ways to solve social problems and improve community access to modern telecommunications.

The Debate

Progress has been made, but a deeper look at the numbers in "A Nation Online" reveals that considerable work remains to bridge the digital divide. With 54 percent of Americans online, the current Administration sees "A Nation Online" as proof that a targeted national commitment to bridging the divide is no longer necessary. Along with a 17 percent decrease in educational technology funding from FY 2001, the TOP and CTC programs have been slated for termination in 2003. The rationale is that Americans are gaining access to computers at an acceptable pace and as a result the role of government can be curtailed.

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Resources: More on this and other information found in Edutopia www.edutopia.org

The Digital Divide

[Sonia Arrison](#), director of the Center for Technology Studies at the Pacific-Research Institute, is one of several conservative commentators who has argued recently that "the digital divide is not a crisis that places citizens in urgent need of more government help." Echoing past comments of Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell that what we have is a "Mercedes divide," Arrison also argues "many of the Internet's so called 'have-nots' are really 'want-nots.'"

On the opposite end of the debate, numerous organizations have rallied in support of continued federal funding for the CTC and TOP programs by launching the [Digital Empowerment](#) advocacy campaign. They note that almost half of Americans do *not* have Internet access at home and only 25 percent of America's poorest households are online compared with approximately 80 percent of homes earning over \$75,000. Only around 30 percent of youth in the lowest household income category use computers at home compared to over 90 percent of youth in the highest income category. Even more striking is the fact that this gap has expanded in recent years. Similar disparities can be found among populations with limited formal education. Hispanics (31.8 percent) and African Americans (39.8 percent) lag behind whites (59.9 percent) in Internet access at home, suggesting serious ethnic and racial divides.

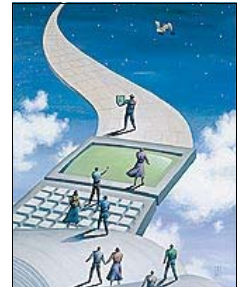
The Civil Rights Forum, Consumers Union, and the Consumer Federation of America released a report in May 2002 called "[Does the Digital Divide Still Exist? Bush Administration Shrugs, But Evidence Says Yes.](#)" The report concludes that the true measure of the digital divide is in assessing home Internet access. It also states that an inability to access the enhanced content available via broadband is creating a second-generation divide. In response to arguments that the Internet is unnecessary or something of a luxury, Mark Lloyd, Executive Director of the Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, said, "Being disconnected in the Information Age is not like being deprived of a Mercedes or some other luxury. Being disconnected means being disconnected from the economy and democratic debate."

Reaping the Rewards of National Investment

A new policy brief from the [Benton Foundation](#), publisher of the [Digital Divide Network](#), explores the likely impact of the federal budget cuts and how ending targeted efforts to bring technology to underserved communities could dampen economic and community development.

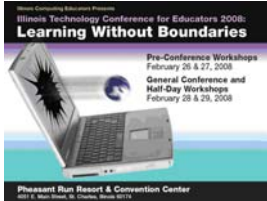
The brief focuses on how national programs such as the CTC and TOP have helped to wire schools and libraries and bring technology training into underserved communities. Objective research on the CTC program from SRI International, one of the nation's premier education technology research groups, shows technology being used in disadvantaged communities is improving pre-school, after-school, and adult learning. A recent report on telecommunications access in rural America shows that TOP has been instrumental in enabling rural communities to enhance local economies, better manage natural resources, and improve access to education and health services. Like the CTC program, its funding peaked in 2001 and elimination is

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“ IL-TCE
Conference will be
held
Feb 26 - Feb 29
at Pheasant Run
Resort, St. Charles,
IL”



Mark your Calendar for IL-TCE 2008: Learning without Boundaries

Registration Type	Fees
Tuesday Pre-Conference Workshop (February 26)	\$150
Wednesday Pre-Conference Workshop (February 27)	\$150
General Conference Day, Thursday, Feb 28, (No 1/2 day Workshop)	\$110
General Conference Day Friday, Feb 29, (No 1/2 day Workshop)	\$110
General Conference Day Thursday, Feb 28 with 1/2 day Workshop	\$150
General Conference Day Friday, Feb 29 with 1/2 day Workshop	\$150

Note: If registering for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, \$70 will be subtracted from your conference fee total!

IL-TCE 08 Online Registration is open at
<http://www.iceberg.org/page.php?pid=31>

Don't forget to Mark your calendars for another 2007 - 2008 RICE meetings!
 April 16, 2008 - 4 - 6 PM @ ROE Moline
 Come Join us!
 Take the RICE survey at:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=WjLtcTEVpzVvnuwdA0q0bQ_3d_3d



The First Meet Me at the Corner Video Podcast Contest Win \$250!

Interview the most interesting person you know. Submit the Mini digital videocassette to:

MEET ME AT THE CORNER, Virtual Field Trips for Kids

Viewers will vote on their favorite video pod cast.

Instructions on how to make a video can be found [on the episode page of this website, check out HOW TO MAKE A VIDEO.](#)

Rules:

Submissions can be created by an individual or a group (ages 7-13).

All videos must be no longer than fifteen (15) minutes.

All videos should be free of copyright materials, music and photos.

All videos must be received by February 29, 2008.

For more information:

For more information on how to submit your Podcast and where to submit along with a whole lot of other information go to:

www.meetmeatthecorner.org/submit



*"Would you like to
submit a video?"*

Here's your chance

to learn how to

make and send it to

Meet me at the

*Corner to add it to
our video podcasts!"*

ICE/RICE Membership Benefits

Membership to Illinois Computing Educators includes many benefits to meet your vast and varied technology needs. Members enjoy several types of benefits including the following: web services, scholarships and awards, local chapters, and professional development. Visit the ICE webpages for more information (www.iceberg.org)

Professional Development and Experiences

Most of you are aware of Atomic Learning (www.atomiclearning.com) where you have access to "just in time; anytime/anyplace" learning modules on software, hardware, and integration strategies. Monthly passwords are mailed out to everyone at the beginning of each month.





RICE Information

"Illinois Technology Conference for Educators occurs every February at Pheasant Run in St. Charles, Illinois. Over a 100 national vendors displaying products and offering more than 250 breakout sessions."



Next RICE Meeting April 16, 2008 bat ROE Moline

ICE/RICE Membership Benefits (cont)

STAR Online (www.star-online.org) has over 50 modules in a virtual teaching and learning community. It is an interactive, self-paced staff development model, which allows participants to gain knowledge and skills in the application of educational technology. Email the ICE office for your access password (info@iceberg.org).

Illinois Technology Conference for Educators (IL-TCE) occurs every February at Pheasant Run in St. Charles, Illinois (www.il-tce.org). There are two days of pre-conference intense training workshops on a variety of technology topics, followed by two full days of the conference. We have over a hundred national vendors displaying their products and offer more than 250 breakout sessions, with leading innovators in technology as our keynote speakers. CPDUs are available.

ICECube is our quarterly newsletter of professional articles about technology in education. Written by leaders in the field throughout the state and beyond, information is provided to enrich your experiences and knowledge. All members are encouraged to contribute to our newsletter.

TECH2008 is a student technology showcase that continues to impress state legislators and their constituents from year to year. For the past sixteen years, public policymakers from around the state have banded together to promote the most comprehensive and diverse demonstration of classroom technology in the Midwest by those who use these technologies on a daily basis -- students and teachers.

The "Collaboratory in Your Classroom" eCourse is for educators who want to use the Collaboratory to develop technology enriched, standards-aligned, project-based learning activities for their students that meet Illinois Learning Standards and Goals. Librarians, media specialists, and technology facilitators who are collaborating with classroom teachers attending the Collaboratory online class are encouraged to participate. The eCourse is free, and Illinois participants may receive 15 CPDUs for completing this class.

<http://collaboratory.nunet.net>

Web Services

ICE provides to its members free email, 5 MB of server space to post personal or classroom web pages, and FTP access to personal documents on the server. Contact info@iceberg.org for more information.

Scholarships

Ice provides annual scholarships to its members and families given in the following categories:

- ICE members pursuing advanced degrees
- ICE members attending professional development workshops and conferences,
- ICE members taking online classes

ICE members' children pursuing a degree in Education



"The BlackBerry 8820 is packed with powerful features, including phone, email, built-in GPS, Wi-Fi support, maps, browser, instant messaging, organizer, media player and more – all in one stylish smartphone."*



Most Important Products of 2007

Every IT organization is charged with doing two basic things

1. Keeping the lights on, by maintaining and securing basic services such as e-mail, calendaring and productivity applications.
2. Blazing new technological trails by planning, piloting and deploying new services to shore up the company's bottom line.

For many organizations, the time and resources required to keep baseline services online and secure means that new initiatives must take a back seat. Enter Google's Google Apps Premier Edition, through which companies can outsource much of the maintenance of core e-mail, calendar and productivity services to Google for \$50 per employee per year.

And when new functionality becomes available, as it did when Google added presentation capabilities to the productivity portion of its Apps offering and when the search giant enabled IMAP support for its messaging service, IT departments needn't touch every client to undertake the upgrades.

RIM BlackBerry 8820

In a year that saw lots of innovation and excitement in the wireless handset industry, Research In Motion's BlackBerry 8820 was simply the best enterprise-grade smart phone eWEEK Labs tested.

RIM's first smart phone to include Wi-Fi connectivity, the BlackBerry 8820 hit all the right notes. The device supports all the important enterprise and personal security standards, includes Wi-Fi diagnostic and survey tools, and adds certificate management capabilities that are not commonly found on most commercially available mobile phones.

RIM also has shown a willingness to explore dual-mode functionality, as its partnership with T-Mobile USA's HotSpot@Home for the Blackberry Curve 8320 adds the VOIP (voice over IP) experience to consumers and small businesses. However, RIM still needs to step up to the plate and forge a relationship with a company that can help build out similar compatibilities with corporate, SIP (Session Initiation Protocol)-enabled voice platforms.

RIM devices are already known for their e-mail prowess, and the 8820 does not disappoint. The BlackBerry Enterprise Server and BlackBerry Internet Service combine to deliver exceptional e-mail control to business and consumer users alike. The 8820 also adds new functionality, such as an integrated GPS receiver that, along with the built-in Telenav software, provides excellent door-to-door directions and opens the door for other business-class services that leverage GPS functionality.

Most Important Products of 2007 (cont)

T-Mobile HotSpot@Home

With the hotSpot@Home, T-Mobile has accomplished something that sounds simple but requires a complex switching infrastructure: It allows Wi-Fi- capable cell phones to use Wi-Fi communications channels for phone calls.

Unlike Wi-Fi phone systems that let users only download music files or check e-mail using Wi-Fi, the T-Mobile solution enables users to roam seamlessly between a GSM cellular connection and a Wi-Fi connection. This means you can use your cell phone in buildings where cell signals are spotty or in areas where there is no coverage at all.

T-Mobile has introduced a couple of Hotspot@Home phones, as well as a compatible BlackBerry Curve. Also available is a Wi-Fi router that is designed to improve battery life and voice quality for phones that use it. However, the beauty of the T-Mobile solution is that it will work with any Wi-Fi access point, anywhere in the world.



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One Laptop Per Child XO

When MIT's Nicholas Negroponte first stated his intention to build an inexpensive laptop for children in the developing world, nearly all the attention focused on his planned price point of \$100. But now that Negroponte and the One Laptop Per Child program have finally launched the XO laptop, the price (which ended up at about \$200) is actually the least amazing thing about this new system.

The XO may be inexpensive, and it may look like a basic kid's toy, but it is anything but cheap or basic. In fact, the XO has in many ways revolutionized laptop design.

The laptop features a ground-breaking new display technology that can be viewed in direct sunlight. The XO also includes powerful integrated mesh wireless capabilities that make it possible for each XO to serve as a networking router for any other XO, making it possible to share a single Internet connection across an entire village.

And all of the XO's features have been designed to work while using the least amount of power possible, making the XO one of the most efficient computing systems ever built. This efficiency also has made it possible to power the XO with a number of alternative power sources, including pull cords.



