

## The Accession of Distance Learning



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For many of us "grownups," it was children who first brought to our attention how entrenched technology is in our society. When our sons and daughters started to "play" on the computer and could do things we couldn't do, it was as if someone had written a new world order. However, as history has shown, young people started many of the revolutions in the world.

When historians look back on this era, they will see government agencies, schools and businesses working furiously to bring technology (with the ingredients for distance learning) into the classrooms, just as economic and productivity issues are bringing corporate training into the workplace.

Do you realize how far we have come in such a short period of time? The Educational Testing Service (the same non-profit organization that gives us the SATs) did an extensive survey this year on the availability of technology in the classroom and how it is being used. Seventy-five percent of the K-12 classrooms have at least one instructional computer. Eighty-five percent of the schools now have Internet access. The "Industry News" column features more results from this survey.

Distance learning is putting the world of knowledge at our fingertips. We can meet with professors at Stanford University and communicate with those scientists who are currently working on the subjects we are studying. In this issue, read about the JASON Project, where students prepare all year to go on a virtual field trip and exploration with Dr. Robert Ballard, discoverer of the sunken RMS Titanic and the German battleship Bismarck.

What a boon technology has been for generating interest in students. Nothing in recent history has done more to make learning and teaching more relevant to students than the advent of distance learning.

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