

# Technology – Power, Problems and Possibilities

**M**OST OF THE YEAR 7 student intake into Australian schools in 1996 will sit for their final school examinations in the year 2001. Suddenly, for principals, their teachers and students, education for the twenty-first century no longer remains just a hypothetical issue – the future we were only thinking about has rapidly overtaken us.

As we come to grips with this idea there are still many questions about the shape and style of education in the future. Technology is usually seen as a key element. However, many politicians, teachers, academics and parents disagree on the place and value of educational technology in the learning process.

Computers are seen as either glorified overhead projectors or as providing total solutions for education in the 21st century! The only people who don't seem to be confused are the students – they are neither frightened nor intimidated by the PC and its applications and they realistically recognise both the usefulness and the limitations of the technologies available to them.

Technological innovations and solutions to revolutionise education always seem to be just ahead of us in time and with resourcing. Classrooms without walls, 'just in time' education, schooling at home, access to world-wide communication, learning without teachers are only some of the scenarios put forward. We hear about the power of the new tools available to learners but rarely is it possible to find solid research on the impact, benefits, possibilities and problems associated with having large numbers of computers as part of the learning process.

## An Evolving Understanding

A 1994 OECD report, *Redefining the Place to Learn* (1), by Susan Steubing, considered the impact of technology on selected schools from fourteen countries. The study found that the widespread integration of technology changed the way classrooms were used with 'flexibility, adaptability, appropriate size, configuration and ease of access to technology' (2) becoming desirable in the design or adaptation of school buildings. Her research showed that no school or system had developed a perfect answer as laboratories, shared technology areas, fully integrated classrooms, school wide networks and laptops were all being used to meet new needs. However, student interaction, inquiry-based learning, shared roles between teacher and learner marked the more successful schools in the study. Distance education and open learn-



Above: Roma Yung, Year 10, using CAD software for Design and Technology.

ing (pioneered in Australia) were regaining popularity across the world as technologies allowed 24-hour access, making the place and the time of learning independent of school buildings. No longer was distance the only tyranny to be overcome. Cost efficiency and equities of provision were also key considerations. The report found concerns were already being aired regarding the 'relevance, social effect, cost, inadequate teacher training, and health issues' (3) associated with the widespread use of technology in education.

Following the launch of the report at the Adelaide LETA Conference in September 1994, educators, administrators and architects came together to consider the shape of education in the future. Conclusions suggested that there was no one right model understood by all. We will more than likely continue to adapt existing buildings as we evolve Steubing's flexible adaptable places for learning, with their new teaching methods, changed roles for teachers and students and new uses of equipment and technology.

## Part-Attendance

Schools will undoubtedly become more responsive to a variety of community needs, and home learning using communication technology may be partly incorporated into student timetables. This could both help 'reduce the required size of a school' (4) and support the retention of small schools 'with a broad range of educational curriculum' (5). It could also facilitate education for those with special needs, part-time and postcompulsory students. There emerged a view amongst those at LETA that, for the foreseeable future, schools would need continuing support to introduce and implement technology programs within their curriculum.

School exemplars were seen as valuable to showcase the integration of new technologies as useful learning tools and to provide practical

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ideas to: promote independent learning through technology; access distance learning opportunities; investigate resource and management issues; cope with changes in work practices and develop down-to-earth strategic planning for integrating technology across whole schools and systems.

It is clear that principals will increasingly be responsible for decisions about the place and value of computer technology in their schools. They will need to show leadership in analysing need and demand against other important resources, auditing current stock, consulting with staff, parents and industry, judging budget capability, seeking appropriate staff development and ensuring ongoing technical support.

### Teacher Technostress

The pressure for schools and schooling to change is considerable and increasing every year, yet in New South Wales the significant ageing of the teaching force is causing concern about keeping educators 'motivated, abreast of current developments, forward looking, innovative and satisfied with their role' (6).

Teacher technostress may not be as great an issue as it was five years ago but, clearly, teacher development is important at a time when both teachers and students are learning about, and with, new technologies.

**Principals will need to 'lead by example' and support their teachers in restructuring classrooms and devising appropriate teaching methodologies, because when technology is integrated extensively across a school site, major philosophical and methodological changes occur which impact on many aspects of school life.**

### Teachers and the Internet

The introduction of the Internet is an example of a widespread development which could either have a major impact or be marginalised in schools.

**Where major use is made of the Internet to enrich the curriculum, there needs to be commitment and enthusiasm from executive and teachers, adequate and appropriate hardware, easy to use software, a staff development program which will develop teacher skills in using and integrating the Internet into learning programs and a financial plan which allows for resource expansion as the interest and need grows.**

Time and access are critical for success when introducing the Internet (as with any technology) and the challenge ahead can be likened to becoming a licensed driver. For the uninitiated, the whole thing is a mystery and their instructor needs to be experienced and content to leave the wheel alone. The excitement then is self-evident as, with the right equipment and simple instructions, a huge world opens up for teachers and students.

The possibilities are staggering and hard to resist for new drivers 'surfing the net'. Parallels for all the things that appeal to the young driver such as communication, confidence, fun, power, prestige and independence can be found through using the Internet.

### Interaction, Not Direction

Use and enjoyment are not enough, however, to make Internet or any other software useful learning tools. Dr Diana Laurillard, from the Open University in Milton Keynes, UK, contends that:

interaction between the learner and the world is a vital part of the learning process ... whether it is a child learning arithmetic, or a student learning about economics, if our academic knowledge remains abstract and formal without any meaningful interpretation, then it is useless (7).

**Laurillard talks of how this interaction with the world is teacher-constructed through experiments, excursions or description. Many traditional teachers aids direct student knowledge but do not allow interaction, discussion or argument.**

Viewing a video, for example, does not allow the student to express their own view of the world. Narrative-based aids, excellent for presenting knowledge, are not as valuable for discovering answers as guided

discovery, when students work with their teachers. Integrated multimedia, she believes, has the potential to provide the guided discovery mode of learning (8) to complement the work done in classes.

### Knowledge Out of Control

The impact of the Internet, CD-ROM and other broadband services are just beginning to be assessed. Because of the seamless use of such tools in society, knowledge acquisition cannot be controlled or monitored as teachers, students and parents were traditionally conditioned to accept.

All ages and abilities are exposed to masses of information which may not be summarised, synthesised organised, categorised or indexed. It may present one person's opinion or it can be biased from the country of origin's viewpoint. Such a powerful learning tool provides information through the full multimedia arsenal of text, still images, moving images, diagrams and sounds and allows interaction and immediacy of communication.

The progressive development of information skills would seem to be essential in providing youngsters with the ability to locate and select information and then to understand and use that information in meaningful and relevant ways.

Critical thinking and problem solving are essential skills if learners are going to be able to 'make connections between related concepts, challenge reliability, distinguish fact from opinion, reason, evaluate, make inferences, judge relevance, distinguish between cause and effect, infer meaning from context and suggest explanations, comparisons and creative alternatives' (9), when the information is coming to them via the new communication technologies rather than through a teacher-constructed world. How schools will enable students to acquire such appropriate multi-dimensional skills of information searching and comprehension is yet to be seen.

As educational leaders, we must consider the holistic linking of how students gain information skills and their development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills through cooperative, negotiated learning in every area of study within our schools' curricula. These have implications for resourcing and for staff development at every school. Dewey urges teachers to:

Look for ways that technology can extend student engagement with the aspects of knowing that they find problematic. Use technology as a tool for focusing students' attention. Search for ways in which technology can enable communication through gesture and manipulation, not just talk. Finally, choose technologies that enable students to experiment and experience the use of ideas for themselves (10). □

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**Note:** This article is based on a presentation given at the International Confederation of Principals Convention, held at Darling Harbour, Sydney, in August 1995.

# Schooling – Where Are We Heading?

**A** FAVOURITE PASTIME in the years leading to the end of a century, and indeed, a millennium, is to 'crystal ball gaze'. In trying to anticipate, in a rational way, what is likely to occur, we attempt to be proactive with regard to our future directions. Decisions are based on the point from which we have come, events in the recent past, the current situation, and how this appears to be developing. It is opportune, therefore, to pause for a few minutes to reflect on where we are heading in schooling as we move into the 21st century.

Many facets of schooling could be dealt with but this paper is confined to those which could arguably be said to be central to schooling: teaching and learning; curriculum; assessment and reporting; technology and resourcing; finance; and, community participation.

## Teaching and Learning

The rate of technological changes has been accelerating over the last decade or so. Computers have made their mark throughout the systems. The way information can be received and presented has altered the way students perceive learning. Teaching, too, has made some concessions to technology but still has relatively little impact on the classroom. To a great extent, this situation has been brought about by the lack of finance, not only for the hardware but also for the training of teachers to use the new technology.

Teaching, however, will be profoundly affected by the introduction of the Internet into schools. With instant world-wide access to information, students will be able to find out what they want to know from this source. Unless teachers in the classroom use similar current information and methods of research, students will be turned off learning. **Lecture style teaching and textbook perusal, with teachers purporting to be the fount of all knowledge, will not work any more.** Co-operative and group learning will become more important, as will individualised instruction via computers.

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## Multi-Sited Learning

Students will not need to be at school all day, every day, but will receive instruction at other sites, and at home, via modem, the Internet or other forms of electronic communication. The socialisation needs of students will become much more the 'stuff' of the school campus. Industry already seeks employees who are self-starters, co-operative, able to work in a team, willing to take initiative and solve problems. **Specific subject matter and content will not be as important and teachers will have to be facilitators of learning as they never have before.**

## Curriculum

**Learning pathways will be more diverse, and attendance requirements will need to change.** There will be a closer alignment of school, TAFE and university, with curriculum being integrated across the sectors. The curriculum will be subject to more regular reviews in a national context, and will be even more politically driven. Vocational education will play an increasingly large part in the context of the total curriculum. There will also be an increased emphasis on issues of global importance, such as environmental, ethnic, geographical and social interdependence.

The pattern of the curriculum will change, and indeed, this is already occurring. **There will be much less emphasis on linear, lock-step patterns, but stress on vertical structures and acceleration, with students moving into, and out of, the school to take courses which will suit their own concept of their future, as they seek to accumulate an exit document suited to their purposes.**

Curriculum will be integrated, rather than discipline-based, and teachers will be trained to be multi-skilled and able to meet the challenges of the social problems which will have increased enormously and impacted even more than they now do into the school environment.

## Assessment and Reporting

With vertical and other non-linear structures, there will need to be a different way of assessing and reporting student achievement. The



greater breadth and variety of courses, particularly those with practical and artistic components, will require a form of assessment that will give greater detail on particular aspects of a student's progress. This will require reports which are cumulative, have specific detail about particular aspects of a student's progress and will be more narrative in form. When computer programs can deliver easy-to-use formats of this type, computerisation of reports will be the norm.

Parents will expect to receive detailed reports from the school in a format that is easy to understand. At the same time, they will also receive greater information from outside the school, such as Statewide referenced test reports which will ensure that schools are seen to be accountable for their teaching and learning practices.

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Reporting on outcomes will become more prominent and students' personal attributes will also be monitored. More group or work-team projects will be assessed so that some measure of ability to work in teams can be provided to employers.

Reports will be issued more often than twice a year - probably at the end of each term. However, these reports will be on individual subjects rather than on a 'whole school' basis and may well be delivered at different points throughout the school year.

### **Technology and Resourcing**

There is no doubt that technology will dominate the schooling of the future. The benefits of vast amounts of knowledge available in electronic form will be irresistible to teachers and school curriculum coordinators. Unfortunately this will also mean a widening of the gap between the schools in more affluent communities and those in less fortunate areas. This 'technology gap' will emerge because of the enormous costs of bringing up-to-date technology to schools. With governments continuing to push the 'short of funds' line, more and more of a school's funding will have to be found locally, through sponsorship and fundraising.

The implications for staff, and staff training, are also enormous. Lack of funds for training purposes will inhibit the uptake of technology. If it is to occur, funds will have to be diverted from some other area of the school's operations. One way to assist schools in this would be for government schools to be given a greater number of student-free days each term for technology-related training. Currently, the release of staff for training is expensive and significant change will only occur if further funds for training are made available (possibly Federal). Another alternative would be to increase class sizes to create time for staff release. Even the use of electronic communication, e.g., telephone or video conferencing, satellite hook-up, etc., is relatively expensive and has its limitations, given that research shows that much of the learning of teachers is obtained from the informal meeting of teachers at such places as conferences.

### **Finance**

There is no doubt that the politicisation of the educational agenda will continue and this will mean a greater control of what is taught and resourced by the Government. With the education budgets of the various State Governments already taking huge percentages of their budg-

ets, there is little room to move. Thus, it would appear the only way in which more funds could be made available is through the Commonwealth Government. An alternative is to go the way of the USA and use a form of local taxation.

One reality, however, is that if federal funds were forthcoming they would inevitably be tied to the national agenda, and would require States to spend some of their resources in areas such as civics education, health and social issues, and national or global issues of concern at the time.

There is rising concern about the inequities and imbalance of funding already existing vis-a-vis school, TAFE, and university sectors. For too long, the university sector has dominated the school curriculum, not only through the TER, but also by soaking up funds which could more appropriately be used in the secondary and primary schools to improve literacy, numeracy and relationship and social skills. I believe the construction of this balance will be the subject of much debate over the coming decade.

Lack of finance has become a critical issue in the secondary arena, in particular, and a solution must be found, and found quickly. Staffing and accommodation formulas will have to be changed to meet the challenges of the new century. Co-operation, not competition, between governments on the issue of resourcing is desperately needed.

### **Community Participation**

There is an increasingly articulate audience of parents and community bodies who wish to have a say in educational affairs at the local level. School Councils are here to stay but have not yet found their niche in NSW. This will occur over the next few years. More businesses will want to become involved in schools as schools seek their assistance and as they see the benefits of a closer association with schools in training of students, and providing initial experiences which will deliver them more articulate and well-rounded graduates.

Multiculturalism means a greater need to cater for the needs of those from ethnic backgrounds, and for this to occur, schools will need to be more open to expert assistance from outside the school. Social and community issues will impact more on schools and outside assistance will be needed. Teachers will also need to be better trained to deal with these issues.

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**Schools in the future will be more user-friendly, more open and accountable and will grapple with world-wide problems in collaboration with outside agencies.** They will be highly technological, with teaching and learning methodologies adapted to the use of the current technology. Because personal relationship and social problems will be 'part and parcel' of the school curriculum, however, there will be an increasing need for teachers who are attuned to these and have the expertise to deal with students with understanding and compassion. **Technology will change teachers but not dispense with them.** The next decade, in particular, will be exciting and rewarding as we grapple with the challenges ahead. □

# Planning for the 21st Century

## A User-Friendly, Low Stress Approach

**TERRY WYLIE** and **TERRY O'BRIEN** explain the features of a 'futures planning' model which involves all stakeholders in a collaborative venture.

**I**N THIS ARTICLE, we show how we have attempted to plan for taking our school towards the 21st century at Penhurst Girls' High School. We do not intend to present a prescriptive model but merely to show one way of providing leadership and generating commitment to change. This model has worked for us, at a time when restructuring within the NSW Department of School Education has increased the ability of schools to determine their own destinies.

In planning to develop directions and strategies to take the school into the year 2000, we faced the same questions faced by other schools:

- how could we implement Department of School Education priorities and perspectives in a way that would meet the system's requirements and also meet our own school's specific needs?; and,
- how could we focus always on learning and teaching, inspire and support the teachers and create a positive working environment for both students and staff? The puzzle was how to create a framework that meshed these factors with our school community's vision, our gender education policy, our 1996-2000 Strategic Plan, the 1996 Management Plan and the 1996 Budget (all of which were being developed at the same time) into a workable package that could be owned by staff, students and parents, and actually be implemented over the next five years.

### 1. Articulating a Direction

We thought it important for the principal and deputy principal to be seen by staff as a strong leadership team, with shared and definite directions, providing a basis on which a whole school vision could be developed. Hours were spent talking through our own views of education, searching the literature, monitoring Australian and global directions in pedagogy, e.g., whole brain learning and other learning models, as well as Department of School Education priorities and leadership models. We telephoned principals of schools where we admired specific ideas in practice and invited ourselves for an after-school visit (with a bottle of wine), sought out relevant training and development courses and presenters, and reflected on the needs of our school. This reflection was helped by pages of data gathered from parents, staff and

students in a *Needs Analysis Survey* issued by the School Council to guide us in developing the 1996-2000 Strategic Plan. Several main ideas emerged from this reading and dialogue which enabled us to articulate a direction, or vision, to take to the staff.

- We wanted to be a school known for its focus on learning – everything the school does has to be justified by its impact on enhancing student outcomes and learning.
- We wanted to support our teachers in every way – teachers at our school would become better teachers just by being at our school. As a result, they would feel greater professional satisfaction and self-worth, would be of more value to the school and, if they wished, would be more in demand as leaders elsewhere.
- We could establish structures to enable staff to act collegially to help each other and to work together in teams to contribute to school leadership and decision-making, thereby sharing power throughout the school.

Lastly, we would create a structure to visualise the model. We also wanted to give the 'package' of directions a name, to make it real, unique and identifiably ours.

### 2. Stimulating the School Community

This process began with a presentation to the School Council (which includes Student Representative Council members), who endorsed our plans to take these ideas to the whole school. Next came a Professional Development Executive meeting. As we would also do with the staff, the P & C and six Student Representative Council-led year meetings, we explained that we believed it to be part of our job as school leaders to ensure that planning did not start from a blank page. After all, someone needed to unpack the mass of theoretical literature, policies and ideas that was available to us. It was important to identify what was relevant for our purposes, provide a starting place and a set of ideas. However, once that initial sorting was completed, it was time for everyone to get together and decide on common directions and goals for the school. We did think it important to go first to the Executive as our 'leaders of learning' and allow them to comment and reflect on our ideas first, as well as let them be the heralds of pending action to their staffs. This proved to be a good strategy for three reasons.

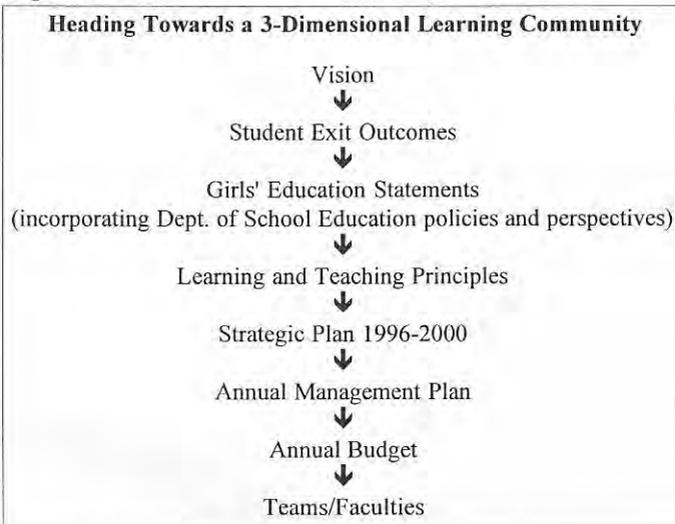
1. There was a sense of anticipation created that something interesting was imminent.
2. Any fears were expressed and conveyed to us – this enabled us to include them in our preparation for the staff meeting.
3. A number of teachers came to see us and tell us how exciting it sounded, and how pleased they would be to be involved. This was particularly so with those looking at future promotion.

We also developed a structure to show that all our 'bits of paper' were heading in the same direction (see *Figure 1, page 35*).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

*Mr Terry O'Brien is the Principal of Penhurst Girls High School and Mr Terry Wylie is the Deputy Principal.*

Figure 1



At the staff meeting, we described the type of organisation we wanted to become, stressing that we were building on progress already made. We believed it was essential that the staff understood that we were looking at a developmental process and one which was very 'Penshurst'. We hoped that this would ensure that the directions and strategies that we developed would be seen by all groups in our school community (and by the teachers, in particular, who would be implementing them) as meaningful, non-threatening and relevant. We flagged that, over the next four weeks, they would receive four items of professional reading, as well as a synopsis of data from the student, parent and teacher Strategic Plan surveys. It was also announced that we wanted them to read this material in preparation for a special 'Major School Planning Workshop'. This would be held a month later, after school, and everyone would be expected to attend. The readings were also issued to, and discussed with, the P & C and the student councillors.

### 3. Great Staff Input Equals Great Staff Ownership and Commitment.

This stage of our planning consisted of three major planning meetings – the Major School Planning Workshop, an Executive Working Party afternoon and a final staff meeting. We became aware that teachers were doing the reading and discussing it – those who were absent on the day an article was issued would come in search of a copy and we were astonished by the number of staff who called by to express agreement or disagreement with a particular point made by one of the authors. For some, it was the first real professional reading they had done since university. We put a lot of planning into the workshop (and into afternoon tea, as well!). The groups consisted only of teachers. Members of the Executive were placed in a separate group with an alternate task. The purpose of this was to encourage the teachers to lead discussion and to feel free to express their views. They were divided into groups based on their birthdays to create genuinely cross-sectional groups and, for fun, the four tasks were on coloured sheets and sealed in separate envelopes with the time that the envelope was to be opened written on the front. A plenary session with reporting back was included to ensure the work was done. The Executive went off to write draft 'Student Exit Outcomes' and a draft 'Vision Statement' using a wonderful set of parent answers from the School Council Survey to the question: 'What do parents want from this school for their daughters'. Parent answers had provided a blend of learning, personal, vocational, self-esteem and citizenship requirements for them to work with. Meanwhile, the staff had four tasks.

- To list five to ten descriptions of both the type of learners we wished our students to be, and of the type of teaching we needed to provide to achieve this.
- To consider the role of Head Teacher in looking after teacher needs, both practical and educational, and list five to six aspects of the

job as they would like it to be.

- To suggest ways to give staff a greater say on how the school operates without creating more meetings.
- To find a name which would summarise and 'christen' our plans and way of operating for the future.

The quality of the data from these workshops was impressive and overwhelming. The overlap of ideas from all six groups surprised us all and reflected the influence of the readings. The suggested names caused great hilarity. The popular choice was '3 Dimensional: Dynamic, Different, Desirable' (though it was suggested that the three D's could stand for 'Dull, Dopey and Difficult' or 'Dumb, Dumber and Dumbest!') The Task 1 and 2 overheads and worksheets were all handed in, copied and collated for the Executive to attack at their workshop the next day. They used this data from the teaching staff to develop Learning and Teaching Statements, and to redefine their own role statements in the light of what the teachers had said they needed to bring about the outcomes of the Learning and Teaching Statements. The teachers stated clearly and unanimously that their head teachers should be leaders of learners (including teacher learners) more than administrators, so we also looked at what support the Executive needed to meet these demands, and how the deputy and principal could assist. Dinner followed at a local restaurant (it was so collegial and loud we told other diners that we came from a different school!).

The last meeting in the planning process took place once all of the drafts had been disseminated to staff, the P & C and the School Council, then discussed, edited and endorsed by all groups. A one-page discussion paper, outlining the staff recommendations and models in response to the question on decision-making from the workshop, was issued in advance. Once more, they broke into groups (which had to represent at least three faculties) to seek a way to provide access to teams for all staff who wish to be involved in school decision-making; create time for peer networking, professional interaction and sharing; find time for teams to report to staff; and, provide leadership opportunities for staff.

Each group handed in written recommendations to the principal and the deputy principal. We agreed that we would all run with the most supported recommendations which included a meeting structure based on monthly cycle of whole staff/faculty; collegial/mentoring cross-faculty teams and decision-making teams. A particularly innovative recommendation was for an in-school staff/executive shadowing program. Once again, we were surprised at the staff enthusiasm, the overlap of ideas, the lack of cynicism and the general agreement.

We have started the new school year with a 'Towards 2000 Vision', a set of 'Student Exit Outcomes', 'Learning and Teaching Principles' – all of which strongly influenced our 'Strategic Plan', our 'Management Plan' and our 'Budget Plan'. We have christened '3-Dimensional Vision – Dynamic, Different, Desirable'. We have redefined the role of head teacher and developed a decision-making and meeting structure which should allow power to be shared throughout the school. **At the conclusion of Step 1 (as outlined above) the two of us could have written such statements ourselves based on our readings and research. However, they would have remained paper statements with very little chance of being achieved.** We feel optimistic that by turning the theories of leadership and change management into real steps, we have a very good chance of making our initial ideas and visions a reality at Penshurst. We already talk more about learning and teaching around the school. There is an optimistic feeling that, the school has taken control of its own destiny, and this is a good feeling. Our Towards 2000 '3-Dimensional Vision' says that our school is a 'learning community of students, teachers, administrators and parents where structures work to improve teaching practice and shared decision making; where everything is judged by its impact on student outcomes; where all have access to the best possible learning experiences. Our school strives to be a place of joy and challenge, where people want to be'. All staff were involved in the development of these new directions, all parents and students had the opportunity for involvement. This is just one planning model – but it worked for us. □



**T**HE NSW Department of School Education, with its 2,222 schools, is perhaps the largest single education authority in the world. Its move towards the 21st century was announced in August last year, with a massive restructuring of all non-school

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based functions and personnel. Part of the future is cutting costs and that clearly is a factor in the 18-month restructuring period. Administrative salary savings will be \$17 million. Many of us expect this will be chicken feed compared to the as yet undisclosed savings generated by abolishing ten powerful regions and their budgets.

Replacing the regions will be a leaner state office, with recentralised control of all functions. Mental models will be expected to change – one state office does not mean one location. There will be staff at Bridge Street, Blacktown, Newcastle, Wollongong and Bathurst. These offices will not administer regions but use communications and other technology to administer specific functions for the State. Teachers' salaries will be administered from Wollongong, while ancillary salaries and school staffing will be done from Blacktown. Some functions, such as technology support, student transport and properties, will operate from more than one location but the schools serviced from one location could be anywhere in the state, not necessarily the local schools. The system will depend on a series of thirteen telephone numbers where calls from specific schools will be routed to

the appropriate officer for each school in each area of concern, all for the cost of a local call. No longer will schools always deal with a regional office. They will deal with a State Office where all the knowledge and resources are co-ordinated and monitored. There will also be greater use of 'on-line' technology. Will the state office concept work? We shall see. Does it matter if the telephone fax or computer link is with a person five or five hundred miles away, as long as they 'know' your school and, as part of a team, can solve your problem? Forty District offices, each under a Superintendent, are being established to provide the sort of support to schools that has to be local. Each office will service about 50 schools and have about 25 staff. Consultancy support (targeted only to meet government priorities), student welfare, properties and technology advice will be among the district office functions. Quality Assurance and educational audit will also be based there, although union bans are still in place preventing much of this occurring. To ensure ongoing consultation, the Director-General has seconded the presidents of the primary and secondary principals associations to Head Office for the 1996 school year. It should be an interesting year. □



**In this state, the Principals Council has been based on ten strong regions.** Each region has its council all of which are affiliated with the State Council. The Department, through its regions, has supported the Council with release time, funding for travel to Sydney for council delegates and grants for training and development.

With the restructuring of the Department the ten regions are to be abolished. In its response to this move the Council's members indicated a strong preference to retain the collegiality of the region councils. Discussions with the Department initially about how regional financial support could be continued from the new state office, were broadened to include discussions of the Council's role and overall relationship with the Department as employer. When these discussions became tense the Director General intervened. The Council has

been given two options. We could become an independent body, meeting out of school time without the provision of school funds for our purposes. The Department will provide us with a grant-in-aid and we will be free to set up our own structures, meetings and procedures.

The second option is to become a body integral to the Department. Regional councils would cease operations and be replaced by smaller district councils and a much larger representative state council, with meetings once a term in Sydney. The rationale for this is that the Council's structures need to relate to the Department's structures; use of school time and money would be negotiated and subject to a formal agreement.

Under the second option, the Department will provide financial support for meetings and develop a stronger partnership in training and development with some programs

contracted to the Council for delivery.

Because some districts have as few as four secondary schools, a small number of two district councils could operate. Larger meetings of up to 60 principals would be needed to discuss issues and to conduct some training and development, but these meetings would not constitute a structure with office bearers. Council involvement with ASPA, PAPDC and other bodies would be written in to the agreement. The process of consultation has already begun. In a climate of low morale and little trust due to a protracted salaries dispute this consultation is at times heated. Most principals are indicating support for the second option subject to a suitable agreement being negotiated.

Our June Annual Conference should be interesting.

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*Jim Harkin, is President of the NSW  
Secondary Principals Council*

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# Principals in Cyberspace

Are you a regular Internet user? Just a casual surfer? Perhaps you're considering the whole Net thing but aren't sure what it's about? Here's your chance to get acquainted with Cyberspace and to share your experiences with others. **BRUCE STAVERT**, Super Cyber Surfer and principal of Mosman High, introduces us to his regular column below.

**S**o what's the big deal anyway? Why should school principals, who are already some of the busiest people on earth, spend any time surfing around the Internet? What is in it for us and for our schools?

I hope through this column we can answer these questions and, in doing so, get many of you to connect and venture into Cyberspace. I say 'we' because I do not want this column to be merely the ranting of one person.

First, I hope that this column can be used to share knowledge of the Internet and how principals are using it. You may know of some web sites that have provided you with stimulating information relevant to your school, and are therefore probably relevant to other schools as well. You may know of a very useful Newsgroup. You may wish to extol the virtues of email.

Second, I believe that principals should be encouraging their teachers to use the Internet as a teaching tool. To do this, we need to lead by example and to be able to point our teachers towards useful starting points. You may know of some particularly exciting sites on the Net for different subject areas. Your students may have links through the Internet to schools in other countries. Your students may have set up an innovative Web page for their school.

Third, there are issues related to the Internet we all have to explore. For example, there is a great deal of pornography available on line – what are our responsibilities and how do we prevent our students from

accessing it? Can we prevent our students from accessing it? What are your views and how are you tackling these issues in your school?

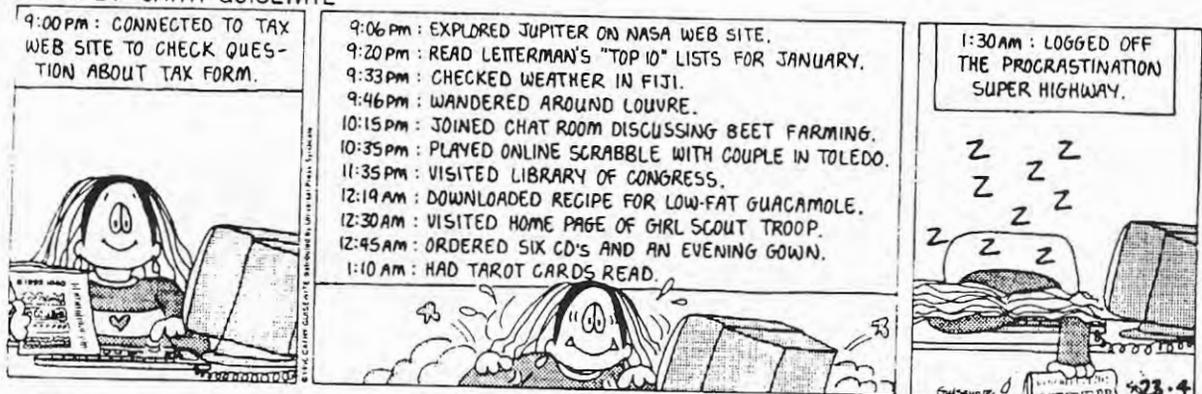
I hope these and many other topics will be aired in future columns. However, I will need your input.

## Technical Stuff

I don't intend this column to go into many technical details; see your computer co-ordinator if you want to find out how you can get connected (or, better still, ask some of your students!!). The only practical advice I will give is this:

- Get a fast modem (the gadget that connects your computer to the telephone lines). 28.8 kilobytes per second is best. I use a 14.4 kilobytes per second modem and often wish it were faster.
- The faster the processor speed of your computer, the better. I use a Pentium running at 100mhz. However, you can use slower models.
- Find an Internet Service Provider. This is the company that connects your computer to the rest of the world through the phone lines. If you buy an internet magazine such as *Internet Australia* or *Internet.au* you will find lists of Service Providers and their prices. The best sort are those which charge a flat monthly rate for connection. If you find yourself paying \$5 to \$10 per hour, the costs will soon mount up for two reasons. First, you will find yourself waiting, waiting, waiting for information to get to you,

## CATHY BY CATHY GUISEWITE



particularly from some of the fancy graphical sites that take a long time to materialise on your screen. I suggest you always have the latest *Principal Matters* handy to while away the hours spent waiting.

Second, if you're like me then you'll find yourself 'surfing' from site to site viewing all sorts of interesting and irrelevant information, such as the location of the 10 most recent earthquakes over magnitude 2.5, or grid positions for the Japanese Motorcycle Grand Prix from the just-completed practice session. It is, literally, all there and just surfing around can be quite time-wasting.

It may sound difficult to get going, but once you are set up the Internet is very easy to use. There are many advertisements for Internet 'packages' in the newspapers and computer magazines. Purchasing one of these could be a good way to start.

Once you have set up your computer and modem, you will need a web browser program. This is a program that does all the hard work for you – you type in the address of a site on the Internet and from then on you just click your mouse button. It displays all of the graphics and text in full living colour. I use Netscape 2.0 and would certainly recommend it. There are others you could consider.

### Search Engines

I will start the ball rolling in this issue with some information and views about search engines and then look at a site on the Internet that offers a great deal to Principals.

Information is not held centrally anywhere on the Internet. It is held on the hard disks of hundreds of thousands of connected computers throughout the world. These computers are owned by universities, private companies, governments, publishers and all manner of organisations. There is information on everything and anything. All this information can be accessed free-of-charge (with a few exceptions). But how do you find it?

The answer is to use a search engine. In simple terms, search engines allow you to search the Internet for information on any topic in which you are interested. Most of these search engines have giant databases of information about what is on the Internet and a computer program that allows you to search their database. Remember: this costs you nothing!! The companies that set up these search engines make ends meet by sponsorship and/or selling advertising at their site. Or they hope to cash in on a growing market for search engines for networks within corporations. These companies search the Internet each day for new sites and to update their information on sites they have already indexed.

One excellent search engine, and one of the most powerful, is called Alta Vista. It stores information on 22 million web pages (that is, information sites) at the time of writing this column and can search 2.5 million web sites each day. The internet address of Alta Vista is: <http://altavista.digital.com/> and is usually accessed very quickly. It may surprise new users that they are connected to the USA almost instantly, all for the price of a local call!

Once connected, you are presented with some information

and a window in which you type the words for your search. For instance, at Mosman High we have been looking into using Peer Mediation. I recently typed in these two words and set Alta Vista searching with a click of the mouse. Within twenty seconds I was presented with a list of sites on which information on peer mediation was available. There's no need to write down the names of these sites, I simply clicked on each with the mouse in turn and examined what information they held. Several contained useful information on the implementation of Peer Mediation at schools in the USA which I saved on a floppy disk, then printed off for discussion.

Alta Vista is one of the most powerful search engines. However, it often comes up with too many sites to look through, many of which contain the words in your search in a completely different context and which are not relevant. Perhaps some of you have found ways around this problem. If so, please tell me.

Another search engine which I use regularly is Yahoo! (<http://www.yahoo.com/>) which is not as powerful but allows you to search within a broad area, for example, education. This cuts down on the number of irrelevant search results. Yet another engine I use is Lycos (<http://www.telstra.com.au/index/lycos.htm>). Again, this is not as powerful as Alta Vista, but has proven to be very useful. The address I have given is the Australian address (hence the *.au*). One disadvantage I have found with Lycos is that it is often slower to access than the search engines in the USA.

### The NASSP Site

The U.S. National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has its own web site (<http://www.nassp.org/index.html>). This is well worth a regular visit as it is updated constantly. There are reports on conferences, publications, projects and research papers. It also contains links to other sites relevant to principals. In fact it's just the sort of site we need ourselves in Australia!!

### Next issue!

I would like to ask you for contributions on two topics for our next issue.

1) **Pages for Principals.** Could you let us all know about any sites you have found to contain useful information for Principals. A brief description of the contents and the internet address please.

2) **Censorship and the Internet.** Your views on this issue and/or how you are dealing with it in your school please. Ideas for future topics would also be gratefully received.

Contributions may be sent via e-mail to: [stavert@zip.com.au](mailto:stavert@zip.com.au) or by normal mail to:

Bruce Stavert  
Mosman High School  
Military Road  
Mosman NSW 2088

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please ensure all responses to Bruce are submitted by **29 August 1996**. Word length: up to 200 words.

## New South Wales

### National focus on principals: is it worth it?

Public education in Australia remains essentially a matter for the states.

The Commonwealth provides between 11 and 13 percent of funds which support public schools. Most of this is not really discretionary, being tied to building or equity programs as well as supporting innovation.

Principals' organisations are much the same. Most of the energy goes into policy advice, professional development, evaluation feedback and the welfare of principals in each state. National and international organisations such as ASPA and the ICP have tended to draw principals together by concentrating on matters of common interest such as educational leadership, credentialling, technology and so on. These issues unite principals from different states, sectors and countries and break down

the barriers between primary and secondary schools. Perhaps the greatest celebration of educational leadership was the second convention the ICP held in Australia last year.

Is this all changing? Recent trends at the national level have caused tensions in NSW at least. Moves to establish a National Principals Federation and moves into an industrial role will be shunned by both NSW principals' organisations, especially since the appearance of independence from existing professional organisations is a pretence. Political advocacy in Canberra is clearly a priority but runs the risk of being divisive unless the content of the advocacy is agreed in advance. Given that the Commonwealth expects a very rapid response when it seeks consultation, there is a need to take great care with what is said on behalf of the country's principals. This actually begs the question of whether the Commonwealth and national principals' organisations have any business in advocating a position on



issues like school fees at all. The chances of presenting a united and national opinion with any substance would seem remote.

The desire to build a stronger national organisation has led to an emphasis on commercial activities which on the one hand have not succeeded and on the other have diminished the emphasis on educational leadership that is the *raison d'être* of the organisation. Organisational aggrandisement, the inevitable divisions that come with political and industrial activity and concerns about consultation are leading to serious questions about national organisations.

What is their role? What proportion of time, money and energy should principals devote to national associations? As the agenda becomes less inclusive, will state organisations and individuals continue to support them?

*Jim Harkin is President, New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council*

# Principals in *Cyberspace*

*Dirty deeds on the Net: how much licence do we give our students in accessing potentially dangerous and unsavoury material while surfing? BRUCE STAVERT examines the issues which need to be addressed by schools and what 'user acceptable' policies are already in place.*

Thank you for all the wonderful responses to my first column – not! I received one e-mail from Bob Stockton at Bombala High in southern NSW. Not only is Bob an Internet user, the modem router is in his storeroom.

## Dangers of the Net

Connection to the Internet allows our students access to the vast amounts of information stored on hundreds of thousands of computers around the world, including information of an unsavoury nature such as pornography, racist literature, the terrorist handbook and so on. It's not the sort of stuff you would keep in your school library. Yet your connection to the Internet allows students to access exactly this sort of information at school. Are you prepared for parental complaints about Julia or Johnny getting hold of pornography or instructions on bomb-making?

## Looking for answers

To find a solution to this dilemma, I searched the Internet: after all, others must have pondered this problem before me. Sure enough, I stumbled across dozens of 'Acceptable Use' policies, mainly from schools and school districts in the US. These policies emphasise that the students themselves are responsible for any information they receive. When a student searches for information using a search engine such as Alta Vista (described in my last column), it is the student who specifies what he or she is searching for. While questionable material exists on the Internet, it does not jump out of the screen; it is 'fetched' by the user who must actively seek it.

## School Acceptable Use policies

While policies found on the Internet are many and varied most share the same main features. Interestingly, there is little or no evidence of the use of software that

attempts to censor student use of the Net. Instead, policies stress that the connection is supplied for educational research and strongly emphasise that students are responsible for using the resource appropriately. They also cover the following issues: use of appropriate language, plagiarism, privacy, hacking (that is, damaging computer systems or networks) and sanctions for breaches of the policy. Most contain agreements to be signed by the student and by a parent/guardian.

The following is a draft policy under consideration at my school which aims to encourage responsible use of the Internet. It is based largely on the Benjamin Franklin Middle School Policy, which can be found on the Net at <http://fms.crcmedia.com/policies/aup.html>, and a paper, 'Developing a School or District Acceptable Use Policy', which can be found at [http://inspire.ospi/wednet.edu:70/00/Accept\\_use\\_policies/IN-policies.txt](http://inspire.ospi/wednet.edu:70/00/Accept_use_policies/IN-policies.txt)

### Draft Acceptable Use policy for student access to the Internet

#### Preamble

Access to the Internet is provided for the purposes of educational research and learning. The purpose of this policy is to provide rules for appropriate use of the Internet. Could students and parents please carefully read and then sign the following agreement.

#### Student agreement

I understand that access to the Internet from Mosman High School must be in support of educational research or learning, and I agree to the following:

- I will refrain from accessing any newsgroups, links, listservs, web pages or other areas of cyberspace that would be considered offensive in the judgement of the school principal or his delegate because of pornographic, racist, violent, illegal, illicit or other content.
- Accordingly, I am responsible for monitoring and appropriately rejecting materials, links, dialogues and information accessed/received by me.
- I will not use valuable Internet time playing non-educational games.
- I will be courteous and use appropriate language. Therefore I will refrain from using obscene, harassing or abusive language and will report any cases of such usage against me to my teacher or the teacher librarian.

• I accept responsibility to keep copyrighted material from entering the school. Therefore I will not download software, games, music, graphics, videos or text materials that are copyrighted. I will not violate any copyright laws by posting or distributing copyrighted material.

• Plagiarism is unacceptable. Therefore I will use any downloaded material in an appropriate manner in assignments, listing its source in a bibliography and clearly specifying any directly quoted material.

• I will not reveal personal information including names, addresses, credit card details and telephone numbers of myself or others.

I will not damage computers, computer systems or networks. Furthermore, if I discover any methods of causing such damage I will report them to the librarian and I will not demonstrate them to others.

I will abide by the current sign-on procedures for access to the computer network.

If I violate any of the terms of this agreement, I will be denied access to the Internet for a time to be determined by the principal and may face further disciplinary action as determined by the principal. I am aware that each case will be considered on its merits.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Roll Class)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

#### Parental agreement

As the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ I hereby acknowledge that I have read the agreement on student use of the Internet and discussed it with my child. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I recognise that, while every effort will be made to monitor student use of the Internet, it is impossible for Mosman High School to continually monitor and restrict access to all controversial materials. I further acknowledge that, while questionable material exists on the net, the user must actively seek it and therefore is ultimately responsible for bringing such material into the school. I therefore do not hold the staff or principal of Mosman High School responsible for any such materials acquired from the Internet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/ Guardian Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent /Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

This policy has been discussed at one P&C meeting and will be published in our newsletter to seek further comment and refinement before it is brought into use.

If you would like further information from the Internet on this issue, try the following sites:

- School Librarian Links: <http://www.yab.com:80/cyberian/>
- Appropriate Use Issues: [gopher://gopher.oise.on.ca/11/resources/Res4Ed/issues/appuse](http://gopher.oise.on.ca/11/resources/Res4Ed/issues/appuse)
- Acceptable Use: [gopher://riceinfo.rice.edu:1170?11?More/Acceptable](http://riceinfo.rice.edu:1170?11?More/Acceptable)

The above have many links to sites containing policies from schools as well as papers discussing this problem.

#### A course worth attending

Why do you need to know about the Internet? One reason is that you are going to be spending a great deal of

money on this resource in the near future. You need to have some idea of what you are spending it on to ensure it is well spent! It is also a great resource for principals. So, how do you learn about the Internet?

In June, some 15 people and I attended an Internet inservice course titled 'It's Never Too Late to Surf – Online Services as a Resource for Principals'. This was an APAPDC workshop convened by Tom Galea, Principal of St John's College Sydney, run by John Laing of the APAPDC and assisted by Peter Anderson, a private consultant. By the end of the first day, complete novices were sending each other e-mail and surfing the web from site to site, seeking and finding information on all manner of subjects. Participants were left with a folder full of information and relevant web-page addresses and a sound knowledge of what the Internet is and how to use it. When this course is run again, don't miss it.

#### The useful and the inane: great web sites

The Education Policy Analysis Archives is an educational journal which publishes papers on the web on issues ranging from staff development policies to AIDS education. It's well worth a read. You can also be placed on the mailing list and receive each issue by e-mail. Address: <http://seamonkey.ed.asu.edu/epaa/>

The School Librarian Links site was mentioned above. It is designed as an all-in-one reference site for school librarians but it is much more than that. As well as information on acceptable use policies, it will help guide your staff and librarian to the best curriculum sites. An excellent place to start cruising the information superhighway! Address: <http://www.yab.com:80/cyberian/>

"George was absent yesterday because he had a stomach". "Please excuse Ray Friday from school. He has very loose vowels". These and many more wonderful excuses can be found at Why Johnnie is Absent, a list of excuses given to teachers by parents for their children's absence from school. Address: <http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~diana/me/funny/absent.htm>

#### Next issue!

I am seeking contributions on the following topics:

- Acceptable use policies - your views on such policies and/or copies of the policies you are using.
- Comments from those who have had experience in the use of software that seeks to restrict student access to undesirable sites.
- Any sites that your colleagues may find useful.

Contributions may be sent by e-mail to: [stavert@zip.com.au](mailto:stavert@zip.com.au) or by normal mail to:

Bruce Stavert, Mosman High School,  
Military Road, Mosman NSW 2088

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please ensure all responses to Bruce are submitted by 11 November 1996. Length: up to 200 words.

# Principals in *Cyberspace*



*Whatever you're looking for is probably out there on the net somewhere – but finding it can be a real chore! BRUCE STAVERT spent several hours in search of the definitive piece on this issue's main theme, self-managing schools.*

## The Great Search Engine Road Test and the Self-Managing School

Since the major theme for this issue is devolution and the self-managing school I decided to search for useful articles on the topic as a 'road test' of some of the popular search engines.

For those who have not used a search engine, these are addresses, or sites, which will search the web (or the search engine's database of web sites) for sites containing the information you seek.

One important tip – infuriatingly, all search engines do not use the same rules to govern their searches. For example, if you want to find a site containing the phrase 'self-managing school', some engines require you to type the phrase in quotation marks as I have just done, while others require a phrase to be typed in brackets. You will save yourself a great deal of time on futile searches if you first access the 'help' on search rules available at most sites.

### • Alta Vista

<http://altavist.digital.com/>

This is one of the most powerful search engines. When I typed 'devolution' into its inquiry window and hit 'submit', it came back with thousands of addresses, most of which had nothing to do with schools. Instead of narrowing the search by adding another term, I asked it to search on self-managing schools, which gave 26 matching sites. Several turned out to be reading lists for university courses and some were no longer retrievable. Only one contained a relevant and interesting article: 'Jurassic Management' by Helen Gunter from the *Journal of Educational Administration*.

(<http://www.mcb.co.uk/services/articles/documents/jea/gunter.htm>)

The term used for self-managing schools in the USA is 'site based management'. I decided to use this as my standard search to compare the search engines. On typing in site+based+management I was told there were about 900 matching documents! Of the first 10, four or five were worth reading. Once more, some were reading lists or were no longer retrievable. Similarly with the

next 10. The above-mentioned document by Helen Gunter appeared on page 13 of the long list. As a rough estimate from perusing a small sample, far less than half were papers, of varying quality and relevance. This is still a vast amount of potentially useful information. The problem is that there is no attempt to sort out what is useful and what is not and a great deal of time will be wasted retrieving and then reading each.

### • Infoseek

<http://www2.infoseek.com/>

'Site based management' gave only 52 hits with this search engine. However, while the quantity was low, the quality was very high. All were papers, no reading lists this time. Skimming the titles and randomly accessing some revealed the majority to be relevant and worth a read. Furthermore, there is an attempt to rank the papers from best match to worst match, giving each paper a score out of 100. One paper of interest was a very quirky and personal commentary on change: 'Of Educational Change, Uncharted Waters, Leaky Boats and Mutinous Crews' by Douglass Ross from AVISO, the *Magazine of the Nova Scotia Teaching Profession*. (<http://fox.nstn.ca/~nstu/avedchan.html>)

### • Webservice

<http://www.webservice.com.au>

This is an Australia only search engine. Unfortunately I found no hits on site based management, self managing school or devolution. I also searched its education directory under the Management heading but found no articles on the management of schools.

• **Web Wombat**

<http://www.webwombat.com.au>

This is also an Australia only search engine with over 700,000 Australian web pages indexed. There are no instructions. It searches its index for pages containing the words you enter, listing those that contain all of the words first. Searching for site based management gave rise to too many non-school related sites. By adding the word 'schools' the search results were somewhat better. However, of the first 10 results, three were for the same course in educational administration and two were the same faculty handbook. Only one was relevant and it was well worth the search: a very interesting article containing some words of caution about applying business management research to schools. It was titled 'Participative Management: Good for Schools?' by Lloyd Logan from *Educational Views*, published by the University of Queensland Graduate School of Education (<http://www.uq.edu.au/education/edvman.html>).

• **Lycos**

<http://www.lycos.com>

This is another of the big US search engines which claims to have over 68 million web pages indexed. Searching on site based management came up with 29,017 sites. Adding the term 'schools' to the search took this down to 436. You can then edit the search to bring up sites that only match all the words in your search. Doing this cut the list to just **one** site, which is on the topic but is more preachy than informative: 'Transferring Decisionmaking to Local Schools: Site Based Management' by Allan R. Odden, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envmnt/go/go100.htm>).

• **Webcrawler**

<http://webcrawler.com/>

This is another popular search engine from the USA. Searching for 'site based management' gave a list of 30 titles with the option of displaying summaries of each site. Disappointingly, none of these were good papers on the topic, but there was a discussion group that was worth a read. This discussion group was like the

newsgroups that can be found on the Internet – you e-mail in your contribution and the person controlling the site decides whether or not your contribution will be added. There were a variety of views on site based management, mainly from those very involved, from very positive to very negative. The address of the discussion group is: <http://www.webcom.com/%7Evelan/discuss/tl/tl2.htm>

• **Yahoo**

<http://www.yahoo.com/>

This is one of the most popular search engines. There were 2859 hits when searching for + site + based + management. Because the list you are given gives you no idea of the size of the sites it has found, you cannot skip the very short ones and must look at the lot. Of the first 20, two could not be retrieved, thirteen were not relevant to schools or education and five were papers that were relevant. One paper titled 'The Who, What and Why of School Based Management' by J. David was from the very well respected journal *Educational Leadership*. It is disappointing that, like so many of the papers I came across, the author does little more than trot out the rationale behind the move towards site based management. Its address is: <http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/decjan/david.html>

Adding +schools to the search cut it down to 11 matches. For some reason, this eliminated many of the sites that were relevant. Making the search +site+based+management+education cut the number of hits down to five, two of which could not be retrieved. Another two were irrelevant and one was a short paper.

• **Metacrawler**

<http://metacrawler.cs.washington.edu:8080/index.html>

Russel Monson from Lowanna College in Moe, Victoria, recommended this search engine. It sends your search to several of the popular search engines and then aggregates the results. It is also the most user-friendly search engine I have come across. I entered 'site based management' as usual and chose the options

'as a phrase' and 'comprehensive search'. Some minutes later I was presented with a list of 19 sites, some of which I had seen before (which is only natural as it uses other search engines).

This time I hit paydirt. One of the sites, at <http://mcrel.org/connect/site-base.html>, contained a list of sites on the topic of site based management. The first site on this list was the paper I had been searching for – research on the implementation of site based management rather than a presentation of views or a rationale. 'An Analysis of Site-Based Management as an Educational Reform Strategy' by Betty Malen, Rodney T. Ogawa and Jennifer Kraze from the Department of Educational Administration, University of Utah is rather long but well worth the read and the search.

Their research casts some doubt on the effectiveness of widespread reform. One statement will probably ring true for many – "...it imposes intense demands on the people involved. People get worn down. Exhaustion overcomes enthusiasm leaving little if any net gain in morale." It is not all gloom and doom; the paper ends by identifying some of the factors that need to be addressed to improve viability. It is well written and well researched and I suggest all educational leaders read it. The address is: <http://www.gse.utah.edu/EdAdm/Galvin/Malogakr.html>

**Over to you!**

• I have received only one Internet policy (thank you Graham Rixon of Penros College, Como, WA). I would like some more, so I can put together another column on this important issue.

• I'd like some more views on the use of programs that censor students access, please.

Contributions may be sent by e-mail to: [stavert@zip.com.au](mailto:stavert@zip.com.au) or by normal mail to: Bruce Stavert, Mosman High School, Military Road, Mosman NSW 2088

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please ensure all responses to Bruce are submitted by **28 February 1997**. Length: up to 200 words.

### Salaries dispute settled

The long and acrimonious salaries dispute was settled by a compromise in September. It is in the form of a consent award between the Department and the Teachers Federation, not a new enterprise agreement. It provides for a cumulative 16.95 percent increase over the next three years with 6 percent now, 4 percent in July 1997 and two increases each of 3 percent in July 1998 and January 1999. The top teacher salary (Step 13 Senior Teacher) will then be \$50,000. Principals of high schools with over 900 students will have a salary of \$81,299 by January 1999. This would place the package value of a secondary principal at over \$105,000.

Terms and conditions of employment remain the same although 2 percent of the 16.96 percent increase (worth \$55 million) will come from re-allocation of funds from within the school sector.

Allowances have been frozen at present cash levels (about \$740 for a principal); there will be some cuts to global budgets affecting utilities and training and development. There is an agreement to look at salary packaging for all teachers and to implement a deferred salary scheme where, after four years on four-fifths salary, a teacher could have a year off on four-fifths pay with superannuation and LSL preserved. There are also cuts to supplementation and minor changes to staffing factors which will save money. One of these is to reduce staffing for part-time students.

Teachers are relieved but morale is not improving despite the settlement. The Teachers Federation is encouraging teachers to decline or refuse duties other than essential ones. With the phasing out of AST roles (and allowances) by 1999, principals wonder where the volunteers will come from.

In the midst of this, the Principals' Council has negotiated both a memorandum of understanding and a

resources agreement with the Director General. The resources agreement provides a total of over \$140,000 per year to the Council for Executive and Administrative Support, travel and accommodation as well as training and development. Another \$40,000 can be drawn from school accounts to support the 40 district councils that now operate. The professional independence of the Council, including its media role, remains unchanged.

Like all states we are pursued by media stories of falling standards and rising violence. Improvement by tests and punishment is proposed in some circles, as is the publication of league tables and charts of failures and suspensions. It is encouraging to see some journalists, like Adele Horinas, as well as some political leaders, present a more accurate picture and defend government schools from the sensationalist critics who never see what our schools really do achieve.

*Jim Harkin is President, New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council*