

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Technology
- Blackboard
- Electronic Classrooms
- Teaching Techniques
- Delivery Facilitation



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What's New in DDL...

The surest sign of the beginning of a new academic year has presented itself as students create the stereotypical buzz heard throughout hallways of most higher learning institutions. However this year, there is a new sound echoing from the Distance and Distributed Learning Department in the form of some innovative delivery methods available to help professors enlighten students in new and exciting ways:

- **Recently, DDL added a Breeze server to its lineup of electronic gear.** It sounds impressive, but what can it do? Try this on for size: Macromedia Breeze can create multimedia activities as well as synchronous online lectures. An instructor can have virtual office hours to meet with distance students

anytime, anywhere. Collaborative content building sessions can be recorded and posted and animations can be created to visually enhance a course. Outside of distance learning, Breeze is also a great way to create basic archival material for any course.

- **DDL is now being carried by Cable Plus in Russell County on channel 67.** This is the first step to establishing an ongoing community driven channel for distance learning and college activities. The channel is currently being supported by Bristol Virginia Utilities and has the potential to reach most regional counties within the near future.
- **Electronic classrooms have been equipped with**

the LCD Smart Tablets (Symposium Interactive Pen Displays). By connecting a computer and projector to the unit, "digital ink" can be written over slides or other applications for a more interactive experience. These boards operate using the electronic classroom's normal computers.

For more information on the Breeze server, cable programming or the Smart Boards, please contact the DDL department at 276.964.7279.



All SwVCC faculty and staff are encouraged to submit items or request topics for inclusion in DLT. Email comments or suggestions to: lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu

Course Statistics & Tracking in Bb

Blackboard's Tracking and Course Statistics features allow faculty to view reports on certain items or aspects of a course site. To access these tools, choose **Course Statistics** from the **Control Panel** under the **Assessment** section .

Tracking is a feature that records the number of times a user accesses an item in your **Content Area**. This feature is an option that must be turned on during the creation of an item. To view the reports, click on the **Content Area** where the document resides. On the right

side of the page is where the **Tracking** button can be found.

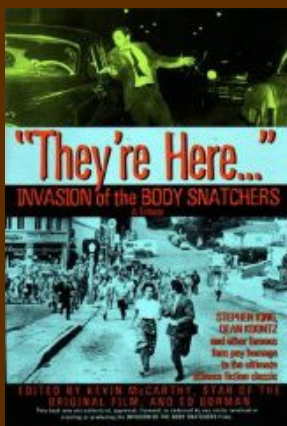
For more information, please contact the Blackboard Administrator at stacy.harris@sw.edu





Visit picasa.google.com for a free download.

“The very word iPod and podcasting have quickly become a part of the everyday lexicon used by young and old.”



Website of the Month

Now managing, editing and sharing pictures on a computer is a snap thanks to a new freebie software download from Google called **Picasa**.

By using Picasa, users can move photos easily from a camera to a computer. Each time Picasa is opened, it automatically locates all pictures and sorts them into albums organized by dates and

folder names.

With Picasa, basic image fixes such as redeye, contrast, color and enhancement are easy. Captions can be created that are attached to the images and if the picture is not the perfect angle, Picasa even zooms, pans and tilts. Photo sharing is easy and collections can even be password protected. There is

even a function called “instant picture chat for sharing while chatting.

For more information or the freebie download, visit <http://picasa.google.com/>

To submit a website feature suggestion, please contact lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu

Breaking the Chalk: Invasion of the Podcasters

Every time I hear the word iPod, I think of the 1956 science fiction movie “Invasion of the Body Snatchers.” You remember the one: where aliens invade earth in plant-like pods and assume the identities of their human caretakers. It was a classic.

Now, fast forward 50 years and we are experiencing a real life invasion of “pods.” Of course, I’m speaking of Apple’s iPod and all the other mp3 players that are quickly becoming an extension of who we are, how we are perceived and through which we are entertained and informed. The very word iPod and podcasting have quickly become a part of the everyday lexicon used by young and old.

For those of you who may not own an mp3 player... remember back to the 1980’s (current students may need to refer to their history textbook) and the introduction of Sony’s Walkman. The “Walkman” and its many imitators were wonders of technology that allowed us to carry our music with us everywhere. The same attraction holds true for all the mp3 players on the market today. They are small, light-weight and ready-to-go. Just download programming from the Internet or your favorite CDs and take it with you. Mp3 players or media players are

miniature hard-drives capable of storing hours of audio and photos (and now, even video) for your listening and viewing pleasure.

Just like many other advances in technology, media players have driven the need for the creation of specialized content. In the case of mp3 players, this content has taken the form of “podcasts.” Podcasts are RSS feeds featuring audio and video files that can be pushed from websites to people’s media players through the routine synchronization of their devices. Podcasts have exploded in popularity in recent months with most of the shows you listen to on the radio or view on television offering podcast versions of their content.

Distance & Distributed Learning at Southwest is also riding the podcasting wave with the development of an iPod enabled sociology class. Thanks to the support of Sociology Professor, Dr. John Brenner, we are one of the first community colleges in the VCCS to develop an iPod enabled course. The class resembles our other online sociology sections with one exception: The lectures are all available as podcasts for download on a student’s mp3 player. Links to the podcasts

are made available through Blackboard and are enabled using the proven technology of Apple’s iTunes. DDL is currently testing the format and plans to promote the course for spring and summer registration.

Distance & Distributed Learning is working on other applications that utilize podcasting technology. The department recently recorded video of a lecture by author Sharyn McCrumb. DDL will be releasing the lecture as both an audio and video podcast for students and faculty. The simplicity and widespread adoption of mp3 and other media players makes this technology very appealing for education. For our students, the application of the technology in education represents an unprecedented level of flexibility. Podcasts will allow students to listen or view lectures when and where they want. Distance & Distributed Learning is also developing a training class for faculty interested in creating podcast material of their own.

So, keep on the lookout for those pod people... they may be knocking on your door next!

For more information on this article, visit Ken Fairbanks’ Blog: “Breaking the Chalk” at <http://breakingthechalk.blogspot.com/>