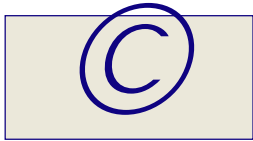


Connections



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55 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM

DURBAN HOSTS 650 DELEGATES FOR COL'S SECOND PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING

The second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning was held in Durban in July 2002 attracting 650 delegates from 55 countries and several international organisations. Gender representation was good – from 18 African countries, there was an equal number of men and women (150 each). Hundreds more also participated through pre-Forum virtual conferences.

COL's President and Chief Executive Officer, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, welcomed the group and challenged them to take action:

This second forum takes place at an important juncture not just for education but also for global progress, growth, peace, security and human well being. It is also appropriate that it should take place here in Africa, a continent that finally seems to be getting the respect, courtesy and consideration that it requires from the global community. The birth of the new African Union, NEPAD and the many other African-designed initiatives all reflect a desire on the part of African leadership to take a greater responsibility to shape the destiny of their nations and people to reduce – if not eliminate altogether – the levels of conflict, poverty, destitution, disease, educational deprivation, abuse of individual freedoms and rights and at the same time paying greater heed to peace, health care, especially from some of the devastating pandemics, welfare and well-being of mothers and infants as well as good governance...

Distance education and open learning, as delivery mechanisms of education, are relatively new. But already, the range of experience is enormous; the pace of growth phenomenal. In no other grouping of nations is the growth as remarkable as it is in the Commonwealth; but then in no other group of nations do we see such a high proportion of people denied access to all levels of learning.

Keynote presentations, plenary sessions, parallel workshops and an exhibition all contributed to five days of intense education and networking. Many keynote addresses and other presentations are now available on COL's web site. www.col.org/pcf2



MANGOSUTHO TECHNIKON CHOIR OPENS THE PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM

The Asa Briggs Lecture was a highlight of the Forum, with the UN's Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, Mr. Stephen Lewis delivering an eye-opening (and moistening) account of the urgent action required to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is attacking the very foundations of Africa. Mr. Lewis, a Canadian former diplomat and politician, lamented the failure of rich donor nations to provide adequate funds for the cause. He also suggested that open and distance education, together with appropriate technology, could have a tremendous impact on the collective scourges of HIV/AIDS and disadvantaged children who are orphaned, out-of-school and/or refugees.

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PLENARY SESSION AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, DURBAN

COPYRIGHT AND THE WEB

COL OPENS CONSULTATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL USE OF THE WEB AND ISSUES OF COPYRIGHT

Many Commonwealth countries have similar copyright legislation and practices – and also have similar debates about what should and shouldn't be in this often-confusing arena. The increasing use of the Internet and the World Wide Web has added a new and very large international dimension. The following article, prepared by Mr. Robert A. Schad, Senior Policy Strategist, University of Regina, and Ms. Wanda Noel, Barrister and Solicitor, Ottawa, describe a current lobby in Canada.

The article is intended to provide some background and spark further Commonwealth-wide discussions through an e-mail-based virtual conference that will be hosted by COL beginning in

Copyright laws need to be amended to legalise educational use of publicly available Internet materials.

February. The three-week conference is open to all and there is no cost. Mr. Schad and Ms. Noel will be the moderators. www.col.org/copyright

Mr. Schad and Ms. Noel presented a well-received session on this topic in Durban at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

REMOVING THE COPYRIGHT BARRIER: EDUCATIONAL USE OF THE INTERNET

A Canadian perspective

The Problem

Copyright law is a barrier to the educational use of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Amending the Canadian *Copyright Act* to remove this barrier is essential if education systems are to produce the highly skilled, computer literate population required in the global information economy.

Current Canadian copyright law often makes the spontaneous use of the Internet by teachers and students illegal. For example, using the information that is found on web sites without obtaining prior written permission is often an infringement of copyright. There are many types of activities that are sound educational practices but are made illegal by current copyright law. A Grade 3 student who copies a picture from a web site, adds it to a report, e-mails the report to her teacher and makes a print copy to show her family has broken copyright law. A university student in a media awareness class that cuts and pastes from different web sites to comment on the composition of the sites is also in violation. A professor who helps his students by posting news clippings on his class web site as a resource for his class is also in violation of copyright law.

The education community in Canada has been actively examining the issues of copyright in a digital environment and its implications for education for a number of years.

The Canadian solution

The education community in Canada is urging its federal government to consider an amendment to the *Copyright Act* to allow students and educators to make effective and legal use of publicly available Internet materials as part of a programme of learning.

A professor who helps his students by posting news clippings on his class web site as a resource for his class is also in violation of copyright law.

In educational institutions, learning is fostered and sustained by the use of the Internet. However, existing copyright laws impede technology-enhanced learning. Current copyright laws are infringed when students and educators engage in routine activities such as forwarding e-mails and copying information for study purposes. Copyright laws must therefore be changed to legalise and promote technology-enhanced learning, allowing students and educators to employ Internet-based resources without breaking copyright law.

Clarity

By providing legal clarity about the educational use of the Internet, the proposed amendment will reduce the risk of litigation. Legal clarity will also ensure that students and teachers are in a better position to promote best information practices and ethical standards respecting copyright. An example is teaching students about the importance of acknowledging the source of material by crediting the author.

Balance

To provide a viable legislative framework for both creators and users of Internet resources, the Canadian government must ensure a balance between creators' rights and public access to knowledge and information. The proposed amendment upholds the

PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lewis maintains that the problems are reversible. "It is such a lamentable moral lapse in the refusal to provide the money to save the lives of human beings that is beyond, I must admit to you, my capacity to understand."

Another highlight was COL's Excellence in Distance Education Awards banquet (see page 6).

COL thanks its local partners, the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) and the Department of Education, South Africa, and the dedicated individuals, led by NADEOSA President Mr. Tony Mays and the Department of Education's Ms. Trudi van Wyk, who contributed immensely to the success of the Forum. Event Dynamics, a South African



STEPHEN LEWIS APPEALS TO DELEGATES FOR HELP IN COMBATING HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

conference services company provided logistical support.

The *third* Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning will be held in Dunedin, New Zealand, from 5 – 8 July 2004. It is being hosted by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ). www.deanz.org.nz

concept of balance, and has conditions that are fair to both the users and creators of copyright material. It would apply uniquely to publicly available sources, and does not change or interfere with the legitimate right of creators who wish to be compensated for the use of their material on the Internet. As well, students and educators benefiting from the amendment would still be required to acknowledge the copyright source and could use Internet material only for educational purposes. Options for providing balanced legislative change are varied and include exceptions, fair dealing, or fair use as it is called in the United States, and collective licensing.

Free versus fee

The Internet is substantially different from commercial vehicles like publishing, radio and television. Where the latter are concerned, educational institutions reimburse creators and producers for the use of their copyright material. It is clear, however, that the Internet is only partially a vehicle for publishing and other commercial ventures. As a driving force in the information age, the Internet is an environment that sustains national and global communication.

Many would argue that the global communications function of the Internet is its most important function. This environment is comprised of the free and willing exchange of ideas, beliefs and knowledge. In fact, the Internet has exerted such influence that non-democratic regimes have, and are attempting to, restrict the

ability of its citizens to access and use it. This is a much different environment than that which arose with the introduction of earlier technologies such as the photocopier.

Many web sites are intended to inform and educate the public for free. The World Wide Web has as many similarities to the town square and speakers corner as it does to a bookstore or publishing house. As such, the Internet promotes many uses and

Legal clarity: An example is teaching students about the importance of acknowledging the source of material by crediting the author.

performances that are not intended for profit, nor intended to be subject to commercial transaction. Public policy decisions pertaining to copyright must correspond to this new complex environment.

What needs to be done?

These considerations all speak to the need for a balanced and innovative approach in the reform of the Canadian copyright law. The proposed amendment ensures that students and educators who are learning and improving skills with publicly available materials on the Internet are able to do so without infringing copyright. A nation's

position in the global information age is dependent on its continued ability to access and learn from Internet-based materials. Copyright laws need to be amended to legalise educational use of publicly available Internet materials.

The information age is here; the decisions made in one country can influence decisions in other countries. This is especially true when dealing with issues in the digital world. What happens to copyright law in one country will be noticed in other countries that are struggling with similar issues. If the education community makes its voice heard regarding the need to remove copyright as a barrier to educational use of the Internet, then there is a greater chance of achieving the needed copyright amendments.

"United we stand, divided we fall" has new resonance in the digital age.

B.Schad/W. Noel

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE BEGINS IN FEBRUARY

TO JOIN THE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ON COPYRIGHT AND THE WEB, SEND AN E-MAIL MESSAGE TO **MAJORDOMO@HUB.COL.ORG** AND PUT THE FOLLOWING IN THE BODY OF THE MESSAGE:
SUBSCRIBE COPYRIGHT [YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS]
(E.G., *SUBSCRIBE COPYRIGHT XXXX@YYYY.ZZ*)

YOU WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION AND FURTHER INFORMATION BY E-MAIL. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION WITHIN 24 HOURS, PLEASE CONTACT COL AT INFO@COL.ORG.

TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR COL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

How do you begin effective educational change? How can new tools, technology and methodology be optimised for distance learning? How should institutions cope with expanding resources and shrinking financial means?

Questions like these sparked discussion and debate in a series of virtual conferences from February to July 2002, initiated by COL and the Federation of Commonwealth Open and Distance Learning Associations (FOCODLA) as a lead-up to the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF) on Open Learning in Durban, South Africa (29 July to 2 August 2002).

Topics for the six conferences took their cue from the 2002 PCF theme of *Open Learning: Transforming Education for Development*, revealing at their close some common elements – among these, broader recognition, acceptance and interest in the

viability of information and communications technology (ICT) as an integrated aspect of open, distance and lifelong learning systems, in spite of continuing issues related to widespread ICT use.

The virtual conference topics were "Bridging the digital divide," "Technology and lifelong learning," "The future of technology for developing countries," "Distance learning in the small and island states in the Commonwealth," "Quality assurance in open and distance education" and "Open and distance learning for community and social development."

The e-mail-based conferences encouraged topical, accessible and immediate discussion of issues related to the 2002 PCF theme, with emphasis on those affecting developing countries. Use of the Internet encouraged the broadest participation possible. The

conferences were open and free to anyone, anywhere, whether they were planning to attend the PCF or not.

Involvement, Commonwealth-wide

The virtual conferences attracted participation from all parts of the Commonwealth and all regions of the globe. The broad appeal of the virtual conferences drew both public and private sector organisations and individuals with interest or investment in open and distance learning. Participants represented special-purpose distance-education institutions as well as conventional ones; international and intergovernmental organisations; governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and included consultants and providers of education-related development services and products.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE RESULTS: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Each conference drew from 125 to 300 participants – the largest number subscribing to “The future of technology for developing countries.” The number of active contributions to each of the virtual conferences, in the form of comments, responses, questions or information, ranged from 100 to more than 300 postings per topic. Some conferences had higher numbers of loquacious participants than others; overall active contributions in each topic hovering at about 50% of those registered. This may seem low, until you consider how many people, face-to-face in a room of 300, would actively participate in a discussion!

The e-mail-based conferences encouraged topical, accessible and immediate discussion.

Each conference was hosted by a FOCODLA member association and moderated by a subject expert from within their membership. The moderators opened each conference with a topical introduction or series of questions, offered focus and context where needed, and contributed a summary at closing.

The FOCODLA members that hosted discussions were the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), the Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE), the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ), the Jamaican Association for Distance and Open Learning (JADOL), the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA), and the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) – co-sponsors along with COL and the Department of Education, South Africa, of the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

Themes and outcomes

In “Bridging the digital divide,” a conference moderated by Andrew Higgins, at the time with the Higher Education Development Centre, the University of Otago, New Zealand (now Director, Flexible Learning, at the Auckland University of Technology), willingness to communicate and share was identified as key in the exchange of technology and information, creating an institutional culture

receptive to technology and change and building and sustaining a collaborative network. Effective sharing must also factor in socio-cultural issues such as language, religion and the role of age in determining receptiveness to, and perception of, technology.

ICT can be a useful tool for lifelong learning, but is only part of the solution for institutions struggling to service growing demand for education and skills training. In the conference on “Technology and lifelong learning,” moderated by Catherine McLoughlin of the School of Education, Australian Catholic University, participants felt strongly that every effort needs to be made to ensure that instructional design, planning and pedagogy are not neglected in ICT-based education delivery. Before implementation, research and consultation must determine if the technology is suitable and financially sustainable. McLoughlin added that lifelong learning and ICT-based education need more research in order to establish best practice.

“The future of technology for developing countries” has several potential obstacles, among them cultural or religious resistance to ICT use; lack of available funding for ICT initiatives; difficulty creating and implementing effective e-learning standards; lack of clear institutional or government ICT policy; expensive or unreliable Internet access; and language-based barriers. Participants in the discussion moderated by Bill Fricker, a consultant with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Canada, pointed to radio and satellite wireless communications technology as having existing and future potential for cost savings, rapid deployment and reliability for distance learning applications.

“Distance learning in the small and island states in the Commonwealth” is best exploited for career training and as an educational outreach to under-served populations, whether at the elementary, secondary or tertiary level. Participants in the conference moderated by David C. Rand, Director of Continuing Education at the University of Technology, Jamaica, cited lack of adequate ICT infrastructure, such as regular access to electricity, as the main reason web-based learning is not widespread outside of urban areas in the small island states. More “traditional” media such as video, audiotapes or CD, and off-campus mobile or stationary learning centres, will continue to be the norm. Factors for success include close collaboration between

institutions, regionally or internationally; weaning away reliance on a “face-to-face” education model; and using a learner-based, multiple-mode strategy for education delivery.

Quality assurance is a must, so that “second-chance” education does not mean “second-rate” education. To this end, quality enhancement practices share equal importance. The discussions on “Quality assurance in open and distance education,” moderated by Mike Robertshaw of the School of Science and Technology, The Open University of Hong Kong, also

“We were able to ask for assistance, request and share materials, and build our network of colleagues.”

concluded that implementation of quality assurance practices should produce not only case-by-case results, but a wider institutional “quality culture.”

The conference on “Open and distance learning for community and social development” was moderated by Tony Mays, distance education consultant, South Africa; Alan Amory, Director, Centre for Information Technology in Higher Education, University of Natal, South Africa; and Audrey Wyngaard of the Distance Education Unit, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. The group found that aside from culture (including religion and language), distance and differing ICT levels are strong potential barriers to forming communities; face-to-face interaction, therefore, might be useful to initiate the development process. Ongoing facilitation and moderation can often help foster mutual understanding and a sense of commonality. Conference participants also agreed that if economies of scale are achieved, community development could be supported through ICT at reasonable cost and with significant results, although training in the technology is a prerequisite.

Technicalities

COL provided all technical support for the virtual conferences through the use of Majordomo list management software, running on an “open source” Linux-based system (see *EdTech News*, page 15, for news on open source software). E-mail use

reduced access problems from intermittent or low-bandwidth Internet connectivity and the asynchronous conferencing enabled participation irrespective of time-zone differences. E-mail conferencing also meant that participants did not need any specialised, expensive software or audio-visual equipment. COL also maintained a web-page archive of all postings, updated daily and sortable by date, thread, subject or author, for viewing by registered participants throughout each virtual conference.

Ironically the majority of technical glitches cropped up during the "Quality assurance in open and distance education" conference. Additionally, a heavy daily message volume in some conferences with frequent postings and many participants affected those with limited e-mail account storage or lower-bandwidth Internet connectivity – as well as those with low-tolerance of high e-mail volumes, which is an increasing concern for many these days!

More virtual conferences

Feedback on this year's virtual conference has been positive overall and the discussions have also helped to inform COL's work.

Moderator David Rand said the conference was an opportunity to "draw upon the expertise of others, and allow for the incubation of ideas. We were able to ask for assistance, request and share materials, and build our network of colleagues." And a conference participant noted that she found that the discussions "set the stage for us to plan long-term on how to produce a learning society. Many thanks."

COL will conduct more virtual conferences (see page 3 about an upcoming one on copyright issues) and another series will be offered as a lead-in to the *third* Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, being hosted by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) in Dunedin, New Zealand from 5 – 8 July 2004.

For more on the virtual conferences and to access moderator summaries, conclusions and recommendations please see www.col.org/virtualconferences.

Other Information from the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is archived at www.col.org/pcf2.

For the latest on the third Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (Dunedin, New Zealand, 5 – 8 July 2004), please visit www.deanz.org.nz.

FROM COL'S PARTNERS

OAC'S BEAGLEY WINS GOLD MEDAL

Ms. Margaret Beagley won the 2002 Gold Medal from the Australasian Association of Distance Education Schools (AADES). The Gold Medal is AADES's premier national award for excellence, this year recognising Ms. Beagley's significant contribution as Executive Principal of Open Access College (OAC) since 1990.

OAC, based in Marden, South Australia, operates a School of the Air, an R-10 School and a Senior Secondary School of Distance Education, along with outreach and publishing programmes. It has developed an outstanding profile nationally and internationally and has received several national awards for publishing, curriculum programmes, the use of new technology and student achievement.

AADES recognised Marg Beagley's leadership in transforming OAC from being seen as a "second and last choice" to being recognised as a creditable and viable option for not only students in remote areas or students unable to study at a local school for medical, social or religious reasons, but for *any* student wishing to broaden and enhance their education. Several students have achieved top marks in State examinations and students at both the primary and secondary levels regularly receive recognition for their work well beyond the College. OAC enrolment, retention and achievement have continued to increase at a dramatic rate, particularly in the last few years. <http://oac.schools.sa.edu.au> and www.aades.edu.au

E-LEARNING GUIDELINES DEVELOPED

A *Consumer's Guide to E-learning* was released in June 2002, providing for the first time in Canada a tool to help distance learners evaluate, in advance, the effectiveness of e-learning programmes that are offered online. The Guide was developed by a consortium of national and community educators in Canada and is available free-of-charge on CD or on the web, in both English and French. The Commonwealth of Learning is a partner in this initiative. www.col.org/newsrelease/0206ConsumersGuide.htm



MARG BEAGLEY (CENTRE) AT THE PACIFIC DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTE AND AADES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, JOINTLY HELD IN SEPTEMBER IN ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WITH SAULA KOROINIVALU (LEFT) AND ASLIKA ULUILAKEBA, BOTH FROM FIJI. NINE EDUCATORS FROM FIJI, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND SOLOMON ISLANDS ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE ON "CONNECTED LEARNING COMMUNITIES", WHICH WAS SUPPORTED BY COL, THE AUSTRALIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE OPEN ACCESS COLLEGE.

COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MBA/MPA LAUNCHED

The new Commonwealth Executive Master of Business/Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA) programme was officially launched at a ceremony on 1 August 2002, held in conjunction with the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Durban. This programme is the outcome of close collaboration between COL and the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and the Open University of Hong Kong. It aims to complement existing MBA/MPA programmes in meeting the growing demands for postgraduate-level education in business and public administration in Commonwealth countries. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programme can be completed by students at their own pace.

CEMBA/CEMPA Executive Governing Board and Academic Board members (Vice-Chancellors and academic representatives from the five founding member universities of the consortium) participated in the launch ceremony. Dr. H. Ian McDonald, Chairman of the COL Board of Governors and also Chairman of the CEMBA/CEMPA Executive Governing Board presided at the ceremony.

The first four courses in the programme have been available to students in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka since July 2002. www.col.org/cemba

COL AWARDS RECOGNISE EXCELLENCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

NEW HONORARY FELLOWS OF COL RECEIVE THEIR AWARDS IN DURBAN.
COL'S PRESIDENT, GAJARAJ DHANARAJAN, AND CHAIRMAN, H. IAN MACDONALD MADE THE PRESENTATIONS



The Commonwealth of Learning recognised excellence in distance education at an awards ceremony held in Durban in conjunction with the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (1 August 2002). COL named new Honorary Fellows of the Commonwealth of Learning and also acknowledged excellence in materials development, institutional achievement and learning experience (conferred on a student who studied through distance education). Further information and full citations are available on COEs web site. www.col.org/edea

HONORARY FELLOWS

Fifteen Commonwealth citizens were recognised for their lifetime contributions to the development of distance education and open learning.

Five British nationals were named Honorary Fellows of the Commonwealth of Learning:

- A renowned historian and BBC personality, **Lord (Asa) Briggs** worked to transform and widen access to education, "drawing new maps of learning." He was Provost of Worcester College (Oxford), Chancellor of the Open University and the first Chairman of COL.
- **Sir John Daniel** is now Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO and, most recently, was Vice-Chancellor of the Open University. He was knighted in 1994 for his services to higher education. His book, *Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education*, published in 1996, established his reputation as a leading thinker about the role of technology in academic communities.

- **Dr. Ros Morpeth** is Executive Director of the National Extension College, an educational trust established in 1963 to pioneer distance learning for adults.
- **Dr. Hilary Perraton** has studied and critiqued distance education for decades. He served the Commonwealth during the 1980s and early 1990s through his role at the Commonwealth Secretariat and was the founding Director of the International Research Foundation for Open Learning, based in Cambridge.
- **Lord (Walter) Perry** is well known for his role in the ground-breaking development of the Open University as its Vice-Chancellor for its first ten years.

Ten more from other Commonwealth countries were also conferred Honorary Fellowships:

- As President, Athabasca University, Alberta, Canada, **Dr. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux** took a once fractious university and transformed it into one of Canada's leading open universities with a solid international reputation.
- **Professor Clifford D. Blake** recently retired as founding Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, Australia – having created the largest distance education provider in Australia. He was also a long-time member of the COL's Board of Governors.
- **Ms. Shona E. Butterfield** has been Chief Executive of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand since 1989 when it was a correspondence trade school, being run as part of the Department of Education. Under her leadership, The Open Polytechnic has become one of the country's largest tertiary institutions with over 30,000 students all

studying technical/vocational subjects through distance education.

- **Dr. Glen M. Farrell**, was founding President of British Columbia's Open Learning Agency (Canada) and shaped the development of the Agency's multi-faceted service for ten years. After he retired in 1998, his knowledge of distance education has been drawn upon, not only by COL, but also by a number of Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth institutions, governmental and international agencies.
- From her early days as a student leader working for the SACHED Trust, her work with national and provincial departments of education and her current position as Director of the South African Institute for Distance Education, **Ms. Jennifer A. Glennie** has always had a determination



VERONICA MCKAY (LEFT) AND ROBERT M'CLOUGHLAN WITH AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION MATERIALS, PRESENTED BY COL BOARD MEMBER, THE HONOURABLE FIAMÉ NAOMI MATA'afa (CENTRE), MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SAMOA.



RECEIVING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

to assist the people of South Africa. She not only played an extensive role in the anti-apartheid struggles of South Africa but also a vital role in its reconstruction and development after the 1994 democratic elections.

- **Dr. Dennis H. Irvine** was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana for 13 years and then UNESCO's Science Adviser to the Caribbean and Education Consultant to the Jamaican Government during the 1980's, prior to joining COL as a senior member of staff. He then served as COL's Regional Adviser in the Caribbean, based in his home country of Jamaica. Dedicated to the advancement of open and distance education, especially in higher education, he has played significant roles in both the Caribbean and in COL's development.
- As the Minister of Education, Civil Aviation and Works of the Royal Kingdom of Tonga for 30 years, and Deputy Prime Minister for much of that time, **Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku** not only shaped the educational services of his country, but also helped influence the educational policies of the 11 other Commonwealth nations in the region. Through his involvement with UNESCO, Commonwealth and other international fora, he brought the world's attention to the South Pacific and tirelessly appealed for the preservation of its values.
- **Professor Geoffrey R.V. Mmari** is the founding Vice-Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania and a former COL Regional Adviser. He has spent his professional life making significant contributions to the educational sector in Tanzania and in improving access to education in eastern Africa, especially through open and distance learning.
- **Professor Ram G. Takwale** has demonstrated how distance education with its focus on people can change poor,

backward, marginalised and forgotten communities into productive, resourceful, healthy and vibrant societies. He is a former Vice-Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India, and was founding Vice-Chancellor of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University and a COL Regional Adviser.

- Long before distance education became fashionable in West Africa, **Alhaji Hafiz S. Wali** was engaged as the founding Director of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) in Kaduna, Nigeria, in establishing and developing a distance education programme on teacher training. Under his leadership, the NTI developed a distinct character and, to this day, it is the only dedicated single-mode teacher training institute delivering in-service teacher training at the first level to Nigerians. He was also a founding member of COL's Board of Governors and a senior staff member in COL's early years.

INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Awards of excellence for institutional achievement were received by:

- **Athabasca University, Canada** – accepted by Dr. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux, President
- **BBC World Service, United Kingdom** – accepted by Mr. Andrew Thompson, Head of Americas Region (formerly Commissioning Editor, Education)
- **Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India** – accepted by Dr. B.P. Sabale, Vice-Chancellor

These awards recognise significant institutional achievements in the innovative and effective application of appropriate learning technologies to reach students who might otherwise not have participated in the learning or training experience.

MATERIALS

Awards of excellence for distance education materials were won by:

- **ABET Practitioner Training Programme** (Certificate and Diploma), a training programme for adult basic education tutors developed by the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training, University of South Africa – accepted by Mrs. Veronica McKay.
- **The Mekong e-Sim Programme**, an Internet-mediated role-play simulation jointly developed by the University of Technology, Sydney; the University of Adelaide; the University of Sydney and the University of New England, Australia – accepted by Dr. Robert McLaughlan, National Centre for Groundwater Management, University of Technology, Sydney.

Fitness for need and purpose, educational design, coherence and integration of media in the study materials and evidence of impacts and benefits derived from evaluation are criteria for this award.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The EDEA learning experience award was presented to **Ms. Frances J. Mensah**, who earned a B.Ed. through distance education while also employed as Director of the Namibian College of Open Learning, Namibia. This award category was developed to provide a forum for the expression of student experience in learning through distance education.



COL LEARNING EXPERIENCE AWARD PRESENTED TO FRANCES MENSAH BY COL BOARD MEMBER, HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR MICHAEL OMOLEWA, NIGERIA'S AMBASSADOR/ PERMANENT DELEGATE TO UNESCO

FOCUS ON AFRICA

19 COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES ARE LOCATED IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



Over the last ten years the Sub-Saharan Commonwealth's capacity to deliver distance education has increased substantially. More than any other development agency, the Commonwealth of Learning has been instrumental in drawing the attention of member governments and their institutions to the application of distance and open learning to enhance access. Including Seychelles and Mauritius, there are 19 Commonwealth countries in Africa – all of them Sub-Saharan.

Open and distance learning, coupled with the application of appropriate technologies, can play a central role in addressing needs in Africa.

This *Focus on Africa* highlights some of COL's current initiatives. For more details, please visit COL's web site. www.col.org/COLinAfrica

Teacher education

Teacher education is an integral component of the focus on basic education. Effective teachers are perhaps the most critical part of any strategy to meet the Education for All targets agreed to in Dakar. Yet shortages of trained teachers have been a chronic problem in much of the developing world, especially in Africa, and that problem is deepening with the decimation of the ranks of teachers by HIV/AIDS.

Recognising that new methods must be tried, and that they could not afford the luxury of temporarily taking untrained teachers from classrooms for professional upgrading, Ministers of Education from eight Southern African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) collaborated with COL to develop distance education training materials to upgrade teachers of upper primary and junior

secondary science, technology and mathematics in subject and general education areas (STAMP 2000+). Eighteen modules on general education courses were available in 2001 and 27 modules on science, technology and mathematics were completed in early 2002. More than 50 authors from throughout the region contributed to the material.

A Pan-African Policy Dialogue on In-Service Teacher Training using Open and Distance Learning was convened and sponsored by COL in July 2001 and hosted by the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, Namibia. Permanent Secretaries of Education and senior officials responsible for teacher training developed co-operative methods to move forward in implementing new strategies.

With the generous collaboration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore and the National Institute of Education in Singapore, COL provides an annual professional development opportunity for Directors and CEOs of teacher training institutes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Focussing on teacher training in recognition of its central importance to achieving the Education for All goal, the Institute has now provided training to 36 teacher training leaders from 15 countries.

Policy development and collaboration

COL has sponsored national forums on developing and/or revising national distance education policies in several countries and is an active member of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) working groups on teacher training and distance education.

Working with the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), COL has developed an online course for distance education policy makers, designed to deepen the knowledge and skills of education managers responsible for open and distance learning. Participants are from South Africa,



RURAL MOZAMBIQUE

Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland and Seychelles.

Vice-chancellors

In 2000, COL initiated an annual Institute for African vice-chancellors entitled, "Managing Change – Leadership and Strategic Change in Higher Education: A strategic development programme for leaders of universities in Commonwealth Africa". The programme is hosted in partnership with the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the University of Abertay Dundee and the Association of African Universities. Fifty-eight senior administrators from 46 institutions based in 17 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have now benefited from the three sessions held to date.

Institutional development

COL has provided technical assistance and advice in the establishment or restructuring of several African institutions, including the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning, the National Teachers' Institute (Nigeria), the Open University of Tanzania and the Zimbabwe Open University.

Internships and attachments

COL has facilitated numerous attachments and study visits by educational leaders in Africa and sent Canadian youth interns to African organisations (see COL in Action, page 10).

Community learning centres

Zambia is one of the beneficiaries of a COL literacy project that is funded by the British Department for International Development. The



CLASS OF 2002: AFRICAN VICE-CHANCELLORS AND SENIOR UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS, ALONG WITH COURSE FACILITATORS, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE'S DUDHOPE CASTLE, SCOTLAND, ATTENDING THE "MANAGING CHANGE" INSTITUTE IN AUGUST

project is demonstrating the use of technology-based community learning centres to support literacy work with a focus on reading skills.

Low-cost media

Through COL's media empowerment programme (COLME), several community-operated applications of portable "briefcase" FM broadcasting stations and desk-top computer video production systems have been set up by COL to serve rural areas and to provide a model for implementation elsewhere. Community radio training focuses on use for health education (including HIV/AIDS) and supplementing primary education. Video applications support agricultural extension and peer health education.

Training laboratory technicians

A certificate training programme, delivered by distance, for laboratory technicians has been adapted for local use in Africa through a programme sponsored by COL and the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa. Polytechnics in Kenya and Uganda were the first to offer the programme.

Schoolnets

COL, through its Commonwealth Electronic Network for Schools and Education (www.col.org/cense), and the new SchoolNetAfrica are collaborating in a Schoolnet Champions Capacity Building Project as well as three other areas: research, the development of SchoolNetAfrica's "knowledge warehouse" and a pilot programme on curriculum integration.

The organisations are organising *ICTs in African Schools – A Workshop for Practitioners and Policymakers* to be held in Botswana in April 2003 (see Events, page 12).

Out-of-school secondary education, Mozambique

With funding from the British Department for International Development, COL and the Ministry of Education, Mozambique, are conducting a pilot project in out-of-school secondary education through distance education, providing opportunities for about 1000 teenagers in rural areas in Nampula province to resume their learning.

Nigeria

Government and education officials in Nigeria have consulted with COL to identify areas of support that the agency can provide for the country's ailing education system. Teacher training through open and distance learning, upgrading of distance education professionals and the re-establishment of the national open university have been identified as first priorities and work has begun. Among the initiatives is the awarding of 50 scholarships to Nigerian

educators to enable them to pursue Masters of Distance Education studies through India's Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Collaboration with UNESCO

UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa – better known by its French acronym, BREDA – and COL are conducting a joint programme for Sub-Saharan Africa, which focuses on open and distance learning (ODL) initiatives. The programme includes work in the areas of advocacy for open schooling, in-service teacher training for West Africa, recognition and transferability of higher education qualifications, non-formal health education through community radio and institutional staff training and development in ODL. COL is also assisting UNESCO with the development of a regional strategy in distance education.

Ministers attend COL Board meeting

The Honourable Professor Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, South Africa and the Honourable Professor Abraham Babalola Borishade, Minister of Education, Nigeria, met with COL's Board of Governors when they gathered in Durban prior to the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

Excerpts from Professor Borishade's remarks:

COL is clearly focussed on pursuing its mandate to serve as a fountain of solutions to the problems and challenges in the broad spectrum of open and distance learning in the Commonwealth countries. COL has served as a dependable facilitator of exchange of experience and expertise across the various countries through its offer of technical support in the development of institutional capacity in distance education, its ever-credible work in course development, research, publications and the construction of its readily accessible web site.

In Nigeria, this session, I received 1.3 million applications from qualified candidates for university education. In the 41 existing universities in the country, there are only 100,000 vacancies.

It has therefore become imperative for us to

adopt open and distance learning to solve the enormous challenges of providing access to thousands of our citizens that are constantly excluded from access to education because of the limited provision of schools and facilities.

We recognise therefore that Nigeria must forge sustained partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning in our programmes to take full advantage of all the help we can get. Nigeria benefited from COL before the humiliating suspension of our country from the Commonwealth, which had a negative impact on the de-



COMMUNITY RADIO

velopment of distance learning in Nigeria.

Professor Asmal noted:

The Commonwealth of Learning has played a leading role in the development of open, distance and technology enhanced learning in various Commonwealth countries. As the only international organisation dedicated to this cause, you are therefore centrally placed to support Governments and institutions and your success as a leading agency is evidenced by the immense recognition you have received for your work from various Commonwealth Ministers of Education. I trust that you will further build on your successes and advance open and distance learning in Africa, in the Commonwealth and globally.

For us as South Africans, the Board meeting and the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning comes at a very crucial time. We are in the process of restructuring our higher education system, so that it is able to meet our developmental needs and priorities. Given our shameful apartheid legacy, our higher education system, as it is currently configured, simply cannot respond adequately to the human resource development challenges that confront us.



AT DURBAN BOARD MEETING, LEFT TO RIGHT: COL'S CHAIRMAN, DR. H. IAN MACDONALD; THE HONOURABLE PROFESSOR ABRAHAM BABALOLA BORISHADE, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, NIGERIA; THE HONOURABLE PROFESSOR KADER ASMAL, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOUTH AFRICA; COL'S PRESIDENT AND CEO, PROFESSOR GAJARAJ DHANARAJAN

COL IN ACTION

COL MID-TERM EVALUATION COMPLETED

An external panel commissioned by COL to undertake a review of all of its activities at the mid-point of the current Three-year Plan (2000 – 2003) has completed its evaluation and the report has been posted on COL's web-site. www.col.org/eval02

The panel found that COL has achieved a great deal in the period under review and has consistently improved upon previous performance in its key roles as a resource for training, partner in capacity building, catalyst for collaboration and information/knowledge provider. Nevertheless it identified a number of areas that should allow COL to further improve its performance in the next planning cycle.

The report notes that "COL is a well-respected organisation within the Commonwealth and even beyond. In the twelve short years of the organisation's existence, COL has touched nearly all of the nations of the Commonwealth and has had a positive impact on the lives of many thousands of people." "The panel hopes that this report and its recommendations will assist COL in building on this strong base," said Mr. Shell Harvey, Chair of the external panel.

16 YOUTH INTERNS POSTED AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

With funding from the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, COL and Canada's Youth International Internship Programme offer young Canadians an opportunity to gain international development work experience through a nine- to 12-month international internship programme. This year, COL received funding for 16 postings.

The interns are recent graduates from arts and science programmes. While they also have volunteer and student work experience, the internship is providing them with their first paid work in their career and, in most cases, their first over-



COL MID-TERM EVALUATION PANEL, LEFT TO RIGHT: GEOFF PETERS, PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (STRATEGY, PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS), THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, U.K.; ESTHER WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, FIJI; SHELL HARVEY (CHAIR), FORMER ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA; JENNY GLENNIE, DIRECTOR, SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION, SOUTH AFRICA; V.S. PRASAD, VICE-CHANCELLOR, DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY, INDIA

seas travel. Working with a variety of organisations in, or on behalf of, developing Commonwealth countries, the interns are learning about the challenges facing the developing world, how education is a broad-based and multi-faceted discipline and how the skills that they will develop during their internship can be transferable to other employment. Internship activities focus largely on areas related to the development and sharing of open learning/distance education resources and technologies to assist developing nations improve access to quality education and training.

The host organisations, in turn, have an opportunity to complete special projects. Upon their return, the interns will be better prepared to enter the Canadian or international workforce full-time.

This year's host organisations are the Association of Commonwealth Universities (U.K.), the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (U.K.), the Commonwealth Press Union (U.K.), the Commonwealth Secretariat's Commonwealth Youth Programme (Regional Centres in Zambia, India and Guyana), the Global Knowledge Partnership Secretariat (Malaysia), the In-Service Training Trust (Zambia), the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (India), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (Nigeria), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (Italy), The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (New Zealand), UNIFEM's Global Programme on Gender and HIV/AIDS (India), the West Africa Rice Development Association (Côte d'Ivoire), the World Agroforestry Centre (Kenya) and the World Alliance for Citizen Participation-CIVICUS (South Africa). www.col.org/internships

COL WINS ADB WORK IN MALDIVES

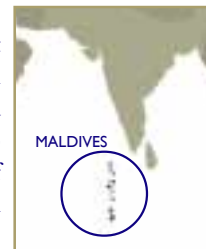
COL and Simon Fraser University (British Columbia, Canada), in partnership, have been selected by the Asian Development Bank to execute a US\$400,000 contract to design a post-secondary education and skills development project in Maldives.

A team of consultants is now assisting the Government of Maldives to prepare a project leading to increased institutional capacity to provide a broad range of post-secondary education and employment skills training that will address labour market demand, contribute to economic and social development and generally assist in reducing poverty in the country.

The project will address issues of capacity, access, and relevance of post-secondary education, including technical/vocational education and training for out-of-school and unemployed youth, especially in the outlying atolls where most of the poor live.

The consultant team includes an educational management and organisational development specialist, a labour and education economist, a continuing education/outreach specialist and a technical education and employment skills training specialist. Four local experts are also part of the team.

Maldives is a group of 19 tropical atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India, totalling 300,000 square kilometres. Historically a sultanate, the islands were colonised first under Dutch and then under British protection. Maldives gained independence from Britain in 1965 and joined the Commonwealth in 1982. Its population of 300,000 has a per capita GDP of US\$2,000. Tourism and fishing industries are being developed on the archipelago.



COL'S 2002/2003 YOUTH INTERNS (LEFT TO RIGHT) BACK ROW: DANIELLE ROSS, SHANTAVARMA, DAVE JOHNSTON-MONJE, ERIN BARRETT, SUSAN WHITE FRONT ROW: JANINE COCKER, SHANNON DOW, KELLEE NGAN, JENNIFER CHAN

BACK ROW: IVOR TOSSELL, KIRK SHANNON, ANNE MCCULLOCH, EMMA JACKSON. FRONT ROW: MIRANDA POST, SHIRA WINDECKER, ANNA GRIMES

PEOPLE

PENINA MLAMA
JOINS COL BOARD

On the advice of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, Commonwealth Secretary-General His Excellency the Rt. Hon. Donald C. McKinnon, has named Professor Penina Mlama, Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), to COL's Board of Governors as the regional appointment for Africa.



PENINA MLAMA

Professor Mlama is currently on leave-of-absence from her long-time position of professor of theatre arts at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. She was part of the team that pioneered the Theatre for Development movement in Africa in which artistic creation is used by the community as a tool for education analysis of development challenges, and a search for solutions.

In addition to her book *Culture and development: The popular theatre approach in Africa* (Uppsala; 1991), where Professor Mlama outlines some of her experiences in theatre for development work, she has also published eight plays in Kiswahili and many articles in the areas of culture and development, theatre in education, creative writing, gender and girls' education.

She also served as Head of Department, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Deputy Vice-Chancellor/ Chief Academic Officer at the University of Dar es Salaam and is a member of many national and international Boards including Chair of the Africa Region for the Commonwealth Writers Prize.

With Chapters in thirty-three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Nairobi-based FAWE is engaged in improving access, retention and participation of girls in education in Africa. www.fawe.org

Also, the Government of United Kingdom has named Dr. Marshall Elliott, Chief Education Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID), as its new representative on COL's Board. Dr. Elliott has previously been in DFID field programme positions in Africa and India and, prior to joining the Department in 1995, was Head of



MARSHALL ELLIOTT

Management and Director of Research at the Sunderland Business School (University of Sunderland). Britain is entitled to a seat on the Board by virtue of its status as a major donor. www.dfid.gov.uk/education

DFID's former Chief Education Adviser, Professor Stephen Matlin, was Britain's previous representative on COL's Board. He left the Department at the end of June 2002 to pursue opportunities as a consultant.

COL STAFF

Ms. Angela Kwan was appointed Development Manager for COL in November 2002. The position was created in order to bring together all those projects that COL undertakes on a fee-for-service basis. Ms. Kwan, who previously served as Project Officer in the President's office for five years, is now responsible for seeking out new fee-for-service opportunities where COL can extend its value to the Commonwealth, within its mandate. Prior to immigrating to Canada in 1996, Ms. Kwan was Head of Administration and Accommodation at the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (now Open University of Hong Kong). www.col.org/akwan



ANGELA KWAN

In June, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appointed Mr. Lewis Perinbam, O.C., COL's Senior Adviser, External Relations, to the Board of Governors of the Canadian Centre for Management Development. Created in 1991, the Centre is dedicated to enhancing public sector management capabilities, excellence in teaching and research into public sector management, and promoting a strong corporate culture in the federal public service. Mr. Perinbam has had a career that has spanned three continents: Asia, Europe and North America. He has served as Executive Director of the World University Services of Canada, the first full-time Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the founding Executive Director of the Canadian University Service Overseas and as a Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency. www.col.org/lperinbam



LEWIS PERINBAM

Staff consultant, Dr. Walter Uegama, was honoured by the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) for his pioneering work in promoting higher education in the Americas. CONAHEC is a tri-national (Canada, USA and Mexico) consortium advancing collaboration, co-operation and community-building among higher education institutions in North America. Through his career at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Dr. Uegama has been an active supporter of CONAHEC and, representing UBC, was a founding member of the Consortium's Executive Committee from 1994. He is working with COL and South Asian open universities in developing a collaborative Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Public Administration distance education programme. <http://conahec.org>

Mr. Patrick Julien retired as Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of COL International at the end of September. Mr. Julien joined COL in 1998, on secondment from the Canadian Department of Industry, and was chiefly responsible for establishing COL's affiliate, COL International.

CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU,
1932 — 2002

One of the founding members of COL's Board of Governors, Dr. Anastasios "Chris" Christodoulou, CBE, died in May of this year. He was Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) from 1980 to 1996 and a former Secretary of the U.K. Open University. Dr. Chris had a lifelong commitment to the Commonwealth that began in 1956 in what is now Tanzania where he was a District Commissioner and Magistrate until 1962.



Upon his death, the *Guardian* noted that he was one of "three people who turned the idea for a "university of the air" into the reality of the Open University." And Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, remembered him as one whose "efforts

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

EVENTS

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS TO MEET IN EDINBURGH, HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA

The next Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from 27 – 30 October 2003. With the theme of “Closing the Gap: Access, inclusion and achievement”, the conference comprises three concurrent and inter-related events: the Education Ministers’ conference, the Parallel Symposium and “Showcase Youth.” www.15ccem.com

Showcase Youth is a new feature for the triennial summit, where organisers are inviting young people from throughout the Commonwealth to participate in a Youth Summit – a forum to debate education issues and contribute to the final document of the 15CCEM, the *Edinburgh Communiqué* – and mounting a Showcase of Best Practice to demonstrate examples of learning and teaching that directly involve young people in cutting edge educational processes. Initiatives selected for the Showcase will relate to the main conference themes of “access, inclusion and achievement” and will include creative and performing arts events and the use of new technology for international links.

The Parallel Symposium will address the more technical aspects of the topics being discussed by Ministers, as well as issues of delivery, diversity and leadership.

COL is one of the organisers of the CCEM and is involved in all aspects of the

conference. It will also be presenting its next Three-year Plan to Ministers of Education, seeking their endorsement and associated funding commitments.

The Government of Nigeria will host the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). It will take place in Abuja from 5 – 8 December 2003.

MINISTERS MEET TO CONSIDER VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES

Hosted by the Honourable Danny Faure, Minister of Education, Seychelles, a consultative meeting will be held in Mahé in March 2003 with a group of invited Ministers of Education from Commonwealth small states to discuss and test designs for establishing a virtual university to serve small states.

Commonwealth Ministers of Education have recognised that improved access to quality education and training is critical to these nations and that existing institutions, whether national or regional, although effective, may not be equipped to meet the new demands. They have, therefore, suggested that the more aggressive use of new technologies and technological structures be employed through a collaborative delivery system. In their *Halifax Statement on Education in the Commonwealth*, issued when they last met in December 2000, Commonwealth Ministers of Education requested COL to pursue the establishment of a virtual university designed specifically to serve small member states.

Having now extensively studied how such a virtual university can work, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) constituted by COL is planning to recommend to Education Ministers that the Commonwealth begin work on creating it. Their vision for a virtual university involves a consortium of existing institutions, with key partners being the long-established regional universities in the Caribbean (University of the West Indies) and the South Pacific (University of the South Pacific).

Establishing such a virtual university will require modest levels of funding, agreement by Commonwealth Ministers of Education that the models emerging from the TAC’s studies meet with their own imagery of a virtual university and support from the existing national and regional institutions. After extensive consultation with stakeholders, the TAC’s report will be finalised and presented to Commonwealth Education Ministers when they meet in Edinburgh in October 2003.

The Technical Advisory Committee’s draft report is available on COL’s web site. Comments are welcome. www.col.org/Consultancies/02virtualu.htm

ICTS IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Schoolnet Africa and COL, along with the International Institute for Communication and Development and the World Bank as collaborating partners, are organising an historic event that will engage both schoolnet practitioners and education policymakers in discussions on practical and policy issues relating to efforts to bridge the educational and digital divides in Africa.

ICTs in African Schools – A Workshop for Practitioners and Policymakers will take place in Gaborone from 27 April – 2 May 2003, hosted by the Government of Botswana. An estimated 300 participants will include representatives of schoolnet organisations and Ministries of Education from 30 African countries. Representatives from the donor community, development agencies, multi-lateral organisations, the private sector and civil society are also being invited to participate in the workshop.

The issues for discussion are based on the findings of high-profile research projects that



CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU, 1932 – 2002: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

helped to awaken the consciousness of Commonwealth leaders to recognise the potential of open and distance learning to bring education within the reach of countless numbers of people whom conventional systems had ignored.”

In an obituary published in *The Bulletin* (Association of Commonwealth Universities, London, August 2002: www.acu.ac.uk/bulletin), former President of the University of Waterloo (Canada), Dr. James Downey, remembers Dr. Chris’s significant contribution to the ACU and higher education in the Commonwealth, concluding by saying:

Naturally charming, diplomatically adroit, at home with people of all races and ethnicities, a brilliant organiser and manager, and together with his wife Joan a consummate host, Chris was the very model of a secretary general. He once said that he didn’t have the right stuff to be a vice-chancellor. In this, as I told him, he was wrong. He would have made a superior academic leader in any role he chose. But I am not alone in being thankful that he chose the ones he did, not just for the wonderfully beneficial influence he exercised so broadly, but because it was thus that so many of us lucked into a friendship we shall cherish as long as we live.

form part of the *SchoolNet Africa ICTs for Education in Africa Research Program*.

One objective of the workshop is to allow a first-time opportunity for African schoolnet practitioners and policymakers to share information, experiences and case studies *as Africans*, with the view of promoting co-ordinated initiatives addressing bridging the digital divide and other priorities such as Education for All. Another is to find solutions to the challenges that accompany the introduction of information and communications technologies into education.

The workshop is also intended to serve as an important mobilising forum to highlight the plight of African countries in their efforts to bridge the digital divide and to make recommendations for consideration at the World Summit for Information Society and other global fora. www.schoolmetafrica.net

10TH CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL ODL CONFERENCE

The 10th Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning will be hosted by the U.K. Open University at Madingley Hall, Cambridge, from 23 – 26 September 2003 and will be held this time in association with the Commonwealth of Learning.

To ensure that the conference is interactive in nature, registration is limited to about 70 people. While keynote speakers will make significant contributions, the combination of home groups and parallel sessions will ensure that the content of the conference comes from the participants themselves.

The conference theme is “The future of open and distance learning”. Further information and a call for “initial expressions of interest to present papers or attend” is available at www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference/conference.htm or from Cambridge-Conference@open.ac.uk.

MINEDAF VIII

The Eighth UNESCO Conference of the Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) took place in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, from 2 – 6 December 2002.

With the theme of the meeting being, “Taking up the challenges of education in Africa, from commitments to action”, UNESCO Director-General, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, noted that “MINEDAF VIII is a golden opportunity for Africa’s educational leaders collectively to take the decisive step from commitment to action. Ranging from poor quality and the impact of HIV/AIDS to teacher shortages and under-funding, the challenges facing education in Africa are truly daunting. There are, however, new opportunities to address these challenges with renewed vigour and enhanced support. These opportunities must be seized for the sake of all African children. Their education, after all, is Africa’s future.” www.minedaf.org

COL is collaborating with UNESCO on several African initiatives and accepted invitations to participate at MINEDAF VIII, including a presentation by COL’s President and CEO, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, entitled, “Open and distance learning in developing economies”. He urged African Governments to consider increased use of distance learning as a means of expanding education opportunities, especially in enhancing teacher training in a continent where more than 70 percent of teachers require extensive training to upgrade their skills. www.col.org/speeches

AAOU MEETS IN KOREA

The Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) held its XVI Annual Conference in Seoul, Korea, from 4 – 7 November 2002, hosted by the Korea National Open University. The conference theme was “Open and distance learning in the digital era: Towards a lifelong learning society”.

www.aaou.or.kr

AAOU2002@mail.kmou.ac.kr

GENDER BARRIERS TO ICT

Addressing gender barriers, such as those encountered by women, to the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for education and training, and especially for open and distance learning, an invitational meeting for regional representatives from the developing parts of the Commonwealth was held in Ottawa in June 2002. Participants reviewed outcomes from four regional meetings held earlier to examine the issues. Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) joined with COL in organising and co-sponsoring the meeting.

Global “digital divide” discussions have identified the particular need to address the implications of the ICT revolution for women, recognising the importance of taking measures to ensure that they are not deprived of the opportunity to participate in the emerging economy that is likely to shape the 21st century. www.col.org/wddd

As the meeting concluded, Ms. Lorna Callender, a Caribbean delegate and former Head of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Education Reform Unit (OERU), penned a poem on behalf of all participants.

COMMONWEALTH SISTERS

Commonwealth sisters
Of the four regions
Pacific, African, Asian, Caribbean
Gathered to address
The barriers of women

Barriers of access
To ICT
Relating these to
Socio-cultural relevancy...
And how they could help
To eradicate poverty

Checklists were drawn up
Key issues tabulated
Appropriate strategies
On these we ruminated

Concepts were analysed
Dissected and articulated
Seems everything had
To be gender-related

Some case studies
Presented solutions
Engaging the attention
Of distant institutions

On the international conference
There was much discussion
Planning will continue
At a website location

All in all, we left
Enriched by the meeting
Just saying many thanks
To those guiding it to completion.

NEW RESOURCES

LEADERSHIP IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Leadership for 21st Century Learning: Global perspectives from educational innovators: Colin Latchem and Donald E. Hanna, eds.; Kogan-Page, 2001; ISBN 0-7494-3204-7. This book is going into its second printing, having won the Mildred B. and Charles A. Wedemeyer Award for the best book of the year on open and distance learning in the U.S. Chapters are written by the editors and by distance education leaders throughout the world, including COL's President. The book has received some very complimentary reviews, including one by Don Olcott, Jr. for the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* (July 2001), where he concludes:

In summary, this book should be on the shelf of every university president, senior institutional administrator, dean and department chair, board member, and mid-manager and faculty who has responsibility for leading open and flexible learning organizations. Moreover, this book's synthesis of scholarship, practice, and vision for the field means it should be part of every graduate program in open and flexible learning.

The editors' interviews with global leaders, combined with their scholarly approach to leadership and change, culminate in a wealth of information, experience, and practical strategies for all practitioners and leaders. Corporate training managers and government administrators who are leading open and flexible learning initiatives would also benefit immensely from this book. In conclusion, Latchem and Hanna have written and edited a "leadership handbook" for open and flexible learning professionals at all levels. On a rating scale of 1 to 10, Latchem and Hanna deserve a 12!
www.irrodl.org/content/v2.1/olcott.html

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Technologies for Education: Potential, parameters and prospects: Wadi D. Haddad and Alexandra Draxler, eds.; UNESCO/AED, 2002; ISBN 0-89492-112-6. Prepared on behalf of the publishers by Knowledge Enterprise, Inc./TechKnowLogia, this book outlines the rationales and realities of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education, examines the options and

choices for applying them, and summarises a series of case studies that illustrate how ICTs have been integrated into learning systems in diverse settings. Drawing on a wealth of worldwide knowledge and experience, the book explores how ICTs can promote improvements in educational reach and delivery, content, learning outcomes, teaching, quality and pertinence in developing countries. It covers radio, television, computing and much more, and also includes a chapter by COL's President.

It is available on the web at no charge – 1.5 Mb PDF download for the entire book, but chapters can be downloaded individually.

www.aed.org/publications/TechEdInfo.html

DISTANCE ED IN AFRICA

Enhancing Learning Opportunities in Africa: Distance education and information and communication technologies for learning: Paud Murphy, Stephen Anzalone, Andrea Bosch and Jeanne Moulton; The World Bank, 2002. Part of the World Bank's Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series, this book is intended to increase understanding of how distance education and new ICTs can support education in Africa. It includes recent research, up-to-date statistics and recommendations for "the way forward".

In the book's Foreword, Birger J. Fredriksen (Senior Education Advisor, Human Development, Africa Region, The World Bank) notes that, "in focusing on the possibilities offered by distance education and ICTs, the Bank and African countries have two concerns: First, education on the continent must be developed in a way that contributes to Africa's full participation in the knowledge-based economies of the future. Second, traditional modes of delivering education, particularly at post-basic levels, may be more costly than countries can afford. This will entail difficult choices in many countries. It is important that investments in the new paths to education be grounded on a solid basis of knowledge and shared experience. This report provides an inventory of knowledge gained and points to promising areas for future investment."

The publication is available online – 1.66 Mb PDF download.

www.worldbank.org/afri/bd/wps

TEACHER EDUCATION THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

How can open and distance learning and information and communications technologies (ICTs) provide us with more – and better – teachers? *Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning*, a new book jointly published by COL and RoutledgeFalmer Press provides an in-depth study. Released in August 2002 at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, the book is the third volume in the *World review of distance education and open learning* book series.



Open and distance learning is increasingly used in teacher education in developing and developed countries. It has the potential to strengthen and expand the teaching profession of the 21st century and to help achieve the target of Education for All by 2015. *Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning* examines the case for using open and distance learning and ICTs to train our educators. It draws on wide-ranging and international experience to summarise the strengths and weaknesses of new approaches to the education of teachers. It offers invaluable guidance to policymakers, planners, head-teachers and teachers.

Seventeen authors have contributed to the collection. It was edited by Dr. Bernadette Robinson, Special Professor of Comparative Education at the University of Nottingham, U.K., and Professor Colin Latchem, international consultant on open learning and former Head of the Teaching Learning Group at Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia.

25% DISCOUNT

Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning can be ordered from booksellers worldwide or directly from RoutledgeFalmer Press. It is also available, while quantities last, through COL at a 25% discount – and, for orders from developing Commonwealth countries, shipping charges will be waived. Orders must be accompanied by a pre-payment of Canadian \$30.00 (or equivalent US funds) plus shipping, if applicable, or charged to VISA or MasterCard accounts. Orders should be sent to the Open Learning Agency, Attn. COL Customer Service, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby BC V5G 4S8 Canada; tel: 604.431.3210; fax: 604.431.3381; e-mail: catalogue@ola.bc.ca.

ISBN: 0 415 36956 8; 251 pgs, pbk.

www.col.org/worldreview

EdTech News



OPEN SOURCE BEGINNING TO TAKE HOLD

The continuing issues relating to the legal licensing of software and its costs are pushing many users to investigate alternative solutions. For several years, Linux-based systems have been the primary “open source” software – and Linux is now used on a large number of Internet servers. Companies like IBM support the use of Linux and have entered into agreements with Red Hat, a major supporter/distributor of Linux, to expand the range of IBM servers that run on the operating system.

But Linux does have its drawbacks. Not only is the operating system more complex to install, maintain and use, each programme that the user wants to install must be a “Linux version” or it won’t work. Primarily for this reason, it has yet to emerge from computer rooms, where trained and experienced information technology specialists use it for system support, to the desktops of every-day users.

Other open source software options are now available, however, and are becoming popular. One notable product is OpenOffice (originally StarOffice). This “office suite” was created by Sun Microsystems and is a free download, but the Windows version is a 51 Mb file, so download may be a bit problematic for some. It’s often worth looking for a CD-ROM version – and sometimes paying the nominal fee associated with it.

The suspected practice in some educational institutions, that are already struggling to make ends meet, of making illegal copies of business and educational software is clearly not worth the increasing risk of being exposed for copyright infringement.

And recent offers by mainstream companies of free or highly discounted software for a limited time, may also not be worth the long-term cost of paying unaffordable subscription rates in future years (once dependency has been established through wide-spread usage).

Free software like OpenOffice could be the best approach for many such institutions.

- Links to free (open source) Software: www.free-soft.org
- OpenOffice: www.openoffice.org
- Information on open source software: www.opensource.org
- References on open source software: www.dwbbeeler.com/oss_fs_refs.html
- References for developers: <http://freshmeat.net> and <http://sourceforge.net>
- O’Reilly Open Source Convention, July 22-26, 2002, San Diego, U.S.A.: <http://conferences.oreillyn.com/os2002>
- Open source library systems: www.oss4lib.org

LEARNING TO EFFECTIVELY USE THE INTERNET FOR RESEARCH

The Internet has become one of the most useful vehicles for accessing information about almost any topic, but people often have difficulty finding precisely what it is they are looking for. Some reasons cited for failing to locate information have to do with a lack of knowledge about types of information on the Internet, types of search tools, use of browsers and Internet search terminology.

There are, however, free online learning tutorials that can help to improve proficiencies in using the Internet for research:

Internet tutorials – using and searching the web: Developed by the University of Albany Libraries, this site includes a range of information to assist the researcher, from the basics of Internet research to tips on specific browser types to using a Windows-based software that transfers files between a local and a remote computer.

<http://library.albany.edu/internet>

Internet tutorials for further education: These free tutorials are offered by the RDN Virtual Training Suite (from the Institute for Learning and Research Technology, University of Bristol, U.K.) The self-paced tutorials assist students, lecturers and researchers improve their Internet information literacy and information technology skills. Users can also take quizzes and participate in interactive exercises.

<http://www.vts.rdn.ac.uk>

WebWise: This is a free, online and interactive tutorial for beginners on how to navigate the Internet, provided by the British Broadcasting Corporation. Designed as a 10-hour course, *WebWise* covers basics such as “getting connected, e-mailing, searching, book-marking, making your own address book and building your own web page.” In addition, you will also “learn about technological developments like Digital TV and WAP phones, your legal rights online and the history of the net.”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/learn/index.shtml>

Content for this item was provided by Development Gateway, a new interactive Internet portal for information and knowledge sharing on sustainable development and poverty reduction (Development Gateway Foundation). COL is a major content supplier, contributing information on educational developments in the field of e-learning.

www.developmentgateway.org



60 BILLION E-MAILS PER DAY, HALF OF THEM SPAM — BY 2006

A recent study predicts that e-mail messaging will double to 60 billion per day by 2006, but half of it will be unsolicited.

Of the 31 billion e-mail messages that move across the Internet and private networks daily now, about two-thirds are person-to-person communications and the rest is made up of spam, notifications and alerts for information such as stock prices and sports scores. By 2006, a little over half of the 60 billion messages sent daily will be person-to-person, said Mark Levitt, vice president of Market Researcher IDC.

To ensure e-mail remains a valuable business tool, e-mail software vendors and users will have to find ways to quickly access the most important and timely e-mail messages, said Levitt, who co-wrote a recently published IDC study on e-mail usage with Robert Mahowald, research manager in IDC's collaborative computing programme.

As a result of the e-mail onslaught, users will demand message filtering technology, IDC concludes in the report titled *Worldwide E-mail Usage Forecast, 2002-2006: Know What's Coming Your Way*. The report examines how e-mail has been and will be used for business and personal purposes. It looks at e-mail usage in North America and worldwide markets, including breakdowns of users by type, primary access methods and sent e-mails by purpose and type.

The study also looks at the evolution of newer tools such as instant messaging.

SOURCE: ITWORLD CANADA.COM — [HTTP://ITWORLD.CA](http://itworld.ca)



HACKERS CAN ATTACK ANY OF US

Hacking is not something that only big organisations need to be concerned about. We are all potential targets for hackers – anytime anyone goes online (it's just like every time we walk outside of our front doors we expose ourselves to all the risks of the physical world).

Smaller organisations, institutions and individuals frequently do not adequately protect themselves from attack. You don't have to be individually targeted by a hacker since one hacker may be automatically scanning thousands of personal computers (PCs) to find some that they can penetrate.

What can they do? A malicious hacker might delete files on your hard drive thereby causing your operating system to fail. They can also load code (a small programme) that might cause your hard drive to continuously do "summersaults" until it crashes or that might cause your computer to send junk e-mail to everyone in your address book.

Hackers can also scan servers and PCs to determine if a programme can be loaded that will be used later in a denial-of-service (DoS) attack, where your server might be used along with hundreds of others to mount a co-ordinated attack on a larger corporate server, without you even knowing it. Through the implanted programmes, the computers that are involved in the orchestrated DoS attack request web pages as fast as possible from one organisation's server. Usually, these requests are sent with false return addresses so that even when the target server does respond, it then receives a further message to say that the page went nowhere. With tens of thousands of requests being received per second, even the most powerful of servers can collapse.

A recent DoS attack against the Internet's 13 primary domain name servers left nine out of operation. While administrators frequently do take measures to deflect DoS attacks, sometimes there is little they can do other than to shut down the server until the attack is over... and if we have unprotected servers, we might have aided the criminals in carrying out their attack!

On a personal level, you can do the following to protect yourself:

- Update your Microsoft Windows installation – windowsupdate.microsoft.com.
- Install anti-virus software on your PC. This can be done through online purchase and download (e.g., Symantec/Norton or McAfee) – www.symantec.com or www.mcafee.com. Update your virus

"definitions" once or twice a week – this is essential to protect you from the hundreds of new viruses that emerge each day.

- As an increased level of protection, include a personal firewall with your anti-virus software – available from anti-virus software vendors.
- To provide the best defence, consider installing hacker protection (e.g., BlackIce) – www.iss.net.

If you are a system administrator and have not yet done so, you urgently need system-wide anti-virus, firewall and hacker protection!

Further information:

www.iss.net/security_center/protection.php

www.toplayer.com/pdf/faq.pdf

www.nipc.gov/cybernotes/cybernotes.htm

www.symantec.com/press/2001/n010116b.html
dispatch.mcafee.com/eseuritynews/may2002/default.asp

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