

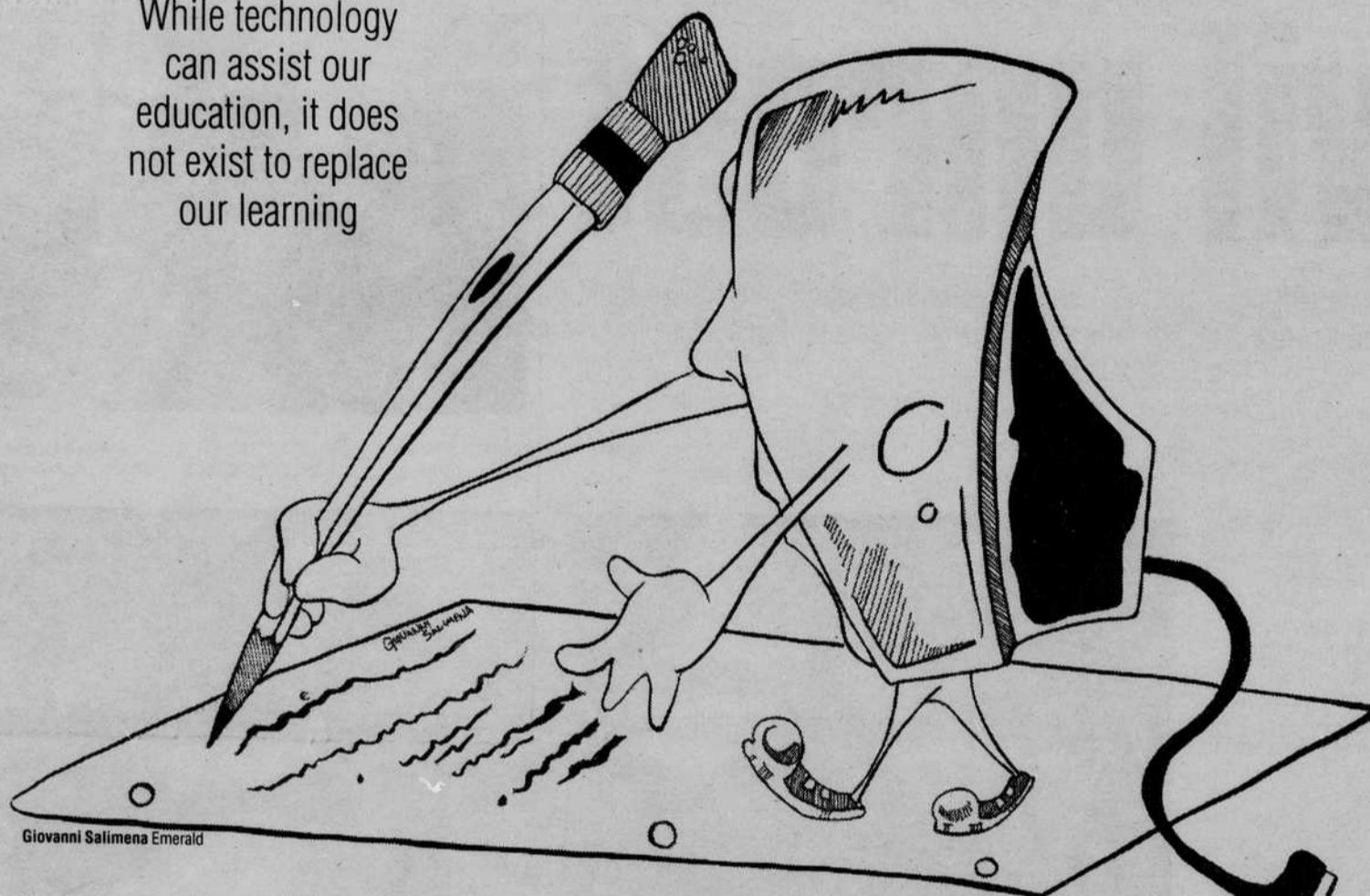
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WORLD WIDE LEARNING

While technology can assist our education, it does not exist to replace our learning



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Ain't technology grand? One hundred years ago it was hard to send a letter. Now we can shop on-line at 2 a.m. in our underwear. We can e-mail our boss so we don't have to face her. We can take photos without film or developing. We can reach people almost anywhere via cell phone.

And now, we don't even have to go to class. The computer, the emblem of the 20th century, makes it sooooo easy for us. Take distance education and communicate via modem. Get lecture notes on your professor's or a company's Web site. Order pizza on-line when finals week gets to be too much to get out of bed.

At some point, it get's a little ridiculous. And a little complicated. While technology sweeps up education, it's easy to get lost in the ease of computers. Suddenly, we are supposed to have the capacity to learn more just because we have access to

almost anything. But there's a lot of garbage out there. Not to mention misuse.

Students have obviously misused the Internet at times. From researching papers and citing bogus Web sites to stealing information easily available on-line, the Web is an educational land mine and a pot of gold. It's good. It's bad. It's complicated. It certainly creates ways to cheat heretofore undreamed of. You can buy research papers on-line for a "guide." Or you can just copy them.

And software piracy is possible over the University server. Just ask University senior Jeffrey Levy, the first person in America to be convicted of distributing copyrighted material over the Internet.

Some professors are guilty of misusing the Internet too. Because they post notes on the Web, they think they can zip through class, skipping and skimming over ideas they know we can get later. When students try to keep up with the teacher, sometimes the response is, "Well, the

notes are on the Web, so you don't have to write." Well, for some students, writing and listening at the same time are crucial. The process of learning is as important as the material itself. Even if notes are on the Web, they are often devoid of context.

And now there's another entrant into World Wide Learning: the Internet note-taking company. In the past, you'd ask a friend to take notes for you or beg someone for them later. Now, you can get them on the Internet. The ethics of such access to notes is complicated. We all acknowledge that while going to class is usually important, sometimes that commitment can't be honored.

On the other hand, the employees — read: students — who post their notes on-line are making a profit off someone else's work. Students can make up to \$2,000 a term doing this, and that's a lot of carrot to wave in front of a poor college student. Paying someone to copy someone else's ideas and then using that for profit

really gives off a seedy vibe. And some professors are calling it intellectual property theft.

It's too late to stop use of the Internet and evaluate the hold that it has on education. But on a case-by-case basis, let's think hard about whether the Web should drive education or whether education should drive the Web.

There are a lot of opportunities out there for education to improve Internet technology and vice versa. In fact, a lot of the misuse of the Internet is based on people's trying to make this marriage work. The notes-on-the-Web idea is based on trying to make information more accessible. The problem is that it can take the work out of education.

And let's face it, that's kind of the point.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

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"We had a lot of success a few years ago in taking down a number of the Colombian drug cartels, and one of the adverse consequences of that was a lot of the operations were moved north into Mexico. There are organized criminal operations there, and they are particularly vicious."

— **President Bill Clinton** after FBI agents and forensic experts were sent to Juarez, Mexico, to investigate a mass grave of more than 100 bodies. Among those found, at least 22 may be Americans. Foxnews.com, Nov. 30.

"Errors can be prevented by designing systems that make it hard for people to do the wrong thing and easy for people to do the right thing."

— **William Richardson**, co-author of a report that claims medical errors may kill up to 98,000 hospital patients per year, more than AIDS or breast cancer. The Associate Press, Nov. 30.

"If you said, 'Look, Elizabeth Dole, Lamar Alexander, John Kasich, Dan Quayle were going to drop out,' I'd have said, 'Yeah, I don't want to smoke any of that.'"

— **Senator John McCain** on being one of the last challengers to Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush. From Time, Nov. 29.

"The guys dance like 12-year-olds kicking around a dead squirrel."

— Host of TV's "Silicon Spin" **John Dvorak** on a group of vacationing computer-industry moguls hitting the dance floor in a Las Vegas club. Newsweek's perspectives, Nov. 29.

Letters to the editor

Don't censor Emerald ads (part 1)

In response to the "Letters to the editor" (ODE, Nov. 24) from Jenny Phillips and Jake Jensen, I have a couple of comments. First, Phillips accuses the Emerald of blocking students' right to free speech because of advertisements that are against her own beliefs. In this ignorant accusation, she calls for censorship of these ads that she dislikes in order to protect our free speech. If that logic doesn't discredit her already, she then goes on to imply that tobacco advertisements restrict the independence of the newspaper, as if Big Tobacco is really concerned with the editorial content of a small university newspaper in Oregon. While I

neither condone nor agree with pornography, tobacco propaganda and anti-choice advertisements, Phillips is way off-base in her accusations of wrong-doing in the acceptance of ads in a country where not everyone agrees with her opinions.

And second, if Jensen gets squeamish at the sight of a couple naked asses, then I am sorry for you, but there are more productive things to do than complain about a silly picture in a magazine that clearly promotes alcohol and drug use. If there should be a complaint (which I don't think there should be), it certainly shouldn't be about an innocent picture.

Jon Rossitto
journalism

Don't censor Emerald ads (part 2)

Concerning Jenny Phillips letter to the editor

(ODE, Nov. 24), I must admit that, frankly, I am confused as to what her complaint about the newspaper actually is. Is her complaint that the Emerald isn't independent enough because it does not adhere to her strict leftist agenda? Or is it that her right to free speech is being "plastered" over because the Emerald does not censor its advertisements?

Also, she makes the dubious statement that "advertisements are a reflection of what the University community ... stand [sic] for." If this is true, why attack the advertisers or the Emerald when Phillips should be demonizing the University community of which she is part? If her fellow community members didn't smoke or read Playboy, then advertisers wouldn't market these products to us.

Dustin Preuitt
graduate student