

# Embracing New Technologies

## Quick Tip

From [Robert Kennedy](#),

## Coping With Change

**The Issue** A recent report suggested that the nation's teachers are woefully incompetent in the use of technology in the classroom. Having been in faculty rooms at one time or another, I am well aware of the resistance to change. But the Internet is changing the way we find information, the way we absorb information, and the way we regurgitate information. So, dear colleagues, get with the program or you will become a pedagogical dinosaur!

How do you update your skills? Here's how:

**Step 1** Buy a state of the art computer! What brand? Doesn't much matter. Get the best deal you can.

**Step 2** Go to [Integrating Technology Into Teaching](#). No need to reinvent the wheel! See what your colleagues are doing.

**Step 3** Subscribe to a mailing list like EDTECH where 3,500 subscribers just like you ask questions and learn about using technology in the classroom. You can find this and dozens of other mailing lists on my [Mailing Lists](#) page.

Remember: you are a teacher! You are in the business of igniting the fires of curiosity. Take your own medicine as you probe, inquire and learn about these exciting technologies! The pace of change is breathtaking! High speed Internet access, which was only a blip on the radar 5 years ago, is as common as a lap top. Electronic commerce, as epitomized by eBay, Yahoo and Amazon.com, has dramatically altered the way we shop. Communications has shrunk the distances and brought the four corners of the globe much closer together. Voice over IP telephony is targeting the consumer market.

**Unprepared Teachers?** Wireless technologies have already revolutionized classroom teaching. Online applications are common place. Email is the preferred mode of communication at many schools. So why do I keep reading that teachers are poorly trained or inadequately prepared to integrate new technologies into the classroom? It is vital that we implement this integration process, for these new technologies are the tools used in the global workplace. We will jeopardize our country's economic future if we produce students who are not in the vanguard of technological advance.

**It's The Teacher's Responsibility** "In the 1998-1999 school year, public schools across the nation spent more than \$5.5 billion on K-12 technology. Yet, according to MDR's recently released New Teachers and Technology report, less than 40% of all teachers feel 'very well prepared' or 'well prepared' to integrate technology into their classroom." So I want to make a case for teachers to embrace new technologies. Do so as though your life depends on it! For in fact it does! Learn everything you can about computers and the Internet. No excuses: lack of funds, no leadership, uncertainty about systems, fear of the unknown, et cetera, et cetera. Just do it! I often compare the Internet's educational resources to those of the Smithsonian Institution or The Library of Congress. The only difference is that I can access those incredibly rich and varied treasures ANY TIME I WANT! I don't need to go to Washington physically. I can go there virtually. Imagine what virtual field trips or scavenger hunts will do to stimulate your students' thinking! The possibilities are endless, limited really only by your imagination and creativity as a teacher.

**Revolutionize Your Thinking** Read the CEO Forum's Report [Meeting Individual Teacher Needs: The Teacher Technology Adoption Process](#) to get an idea of how your journey will unfold. Then brainstorm with your colleagues, administrators and parents. The more you understand the deep seated nature of this revolution which is technology, the more you will want to be a part of it. Every subject area can be enhanced and revitalized through the use of technology. Email alone will open lines of communication to your students efficiently and dramatically whether you teach Latin or Physics. In my area of expertise, which is music, the hardware and software which permit the transcription and replication of scores are incredibly useful. Explore your subject area to find similar nuggets! Also, I find that keeping in touch with developments in your field through mailing lists and forums is effortless and inexpensive. They are a far cry from the old fashioned printed newsletters and journals. Much less effort and work is involved.

**Conclusion** Remember: the Internet had its birth in the research and academic communities. It was created to allow the free and rapid flow of information to benefit higher learning. Let's recapture that focus in our work, and enrich our teaching in the process!

Tim Hillman's wonderful compendium entitled [O, What A Web We Weave](#) looks at computer technology in secondary schools, how it has been integrated, and what faculty reactions have been to the process. He has taught in private schools for many years.