

is&t

News about information services and technology throughout MIT

Volume 24 • Number 3
January/February 2009

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Condor Searches for Cool Trends and Trendsetters

• Robyn Fizz

How well did you predict the Oscar winners this year? Well, let me break it to you gently. The odds are that a piece of software made more accurate predictions than you did. Condor is the name of this prescient forecaster of the Oscars – and other phenomena like consumer trends and election outcomes.

Condor makes its predictions through the dynamic analysis of social networks. Put another way, it mines information shared on the Internet in online forums, blogs, RSS feeds, and Twitter posts.

To predict the winners of the Academy Awards, Condor begins by mining the Oscar Buzz message board on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) at imdb.com. People who contribute to this online forum discuss their “picks and prognostications for the next Oscar race.” Monitoring this message board, Condor looks at the interplay of posts and responses over time. People who quickly get many responses to their posts are rated as trendsetters and given more weight in Condor's algorithms.

Condor then performs sentiment analysis. The software has been programmed to value various words as positive or nega-

tive. It can examine all the posts that discuss *Slumdog Millionaire*, for example, and rank its popularity by calculating the number of positive and negative words used to describe it.

Condor succeeds because the collective mindset of virtual communities closely mirrors that of the real world. The choices made by the members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences create the real-world drama we witness on Oscar night. But these choices are already reflected in the pre-Oscar buzz on the Web.

Condor's Evolution

Condor has been around for six years. It is the brainchild of Peter Gloor, a research scientist in the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence (cci.mit.edu). With the help of colleagues and students, Gloor has developed, tested, and refined the software, which he acknowledges is “made by geeks for geeks.” In its earlier incarnation as TeCFlow (Temporal Communication Flow analysis), the software parsed the email directories of teams, revealing patterns of connection and collaboration. Using TeCFlow's Imapcrawler, individuals could analyze the communication patterns in their own mailboxes – a virtual mirror that provided insights, and sometimes surprises, about their role in their own social networks.

In the last couple of years, with the boom in online social spaces, Condor has taken flight. While it can still be used to analyze email archives, the software excels at

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Condor

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mining and analyzing online posts in narrow domains, like movies and politics. The software is also more accessible now through its Condorview search engine. (New users can request an account at condorview.com).

Condorview works like the Google search engine. By entering keywords into its search field, you can track the popularity of people or trends. For example, when you enter two political candidates' names (x versus y), Condorview can determine which one is garnering the most public interest. Condorview initially filters posts from political blogs based on Google's page ranking. It then constructs its own map of URLs and takes a metric called "betweenness." This measures how influential a blog (or person or concept) is. Blogs like *Instapundit* and *The Huffington Post* have higher betweenness rankings than political blogs with, say, 50 readers.

Gloor's group used Condor to follow the candidates' trend lines throughout the 2008 presidential campaign. While there were clear oscillations over time, Obama's trend line showed him as the frontrunner throughout the race.

Coolhunting and COINs

With its ability to uncover trends before they become mainstream, Condor makes an exceptional "coolhunting" tool. The term coolhunting has been used by marketers since the 1990s: coolhunters are those who make predictions about the next big thing, whether in fashion, electronics, or industrial design. With its ability to mine the Web systematically, Condor has taken coolhunting to the next level.

One of Gloor's key findings has been that the coolest ideas often come from the collective mindset, and that the "carriers of innovation" are the early adopters and improvers of ideas.

Gloor has also identified a new type of organizational model made possible by the Internet, which he calls collaborative innovation networks, or COINs. These are "cyberteams of self-motivated people with a collective vision, enabled by technology to collaborate in achieving a common goal – an innovation – by sharing ideas, information and work."

Gloor points to the creation of the World Wide Web and the development of open-source software, such as Linux, as examples of the COIN philosophy in action. While Tim Berners-Lee is identified as the

creator of the Web, and Linus Torvalds as the chief architect of Linux, both men campaigned to make others aware of their ideas and gave away power to like-minded collaborators. These contributors, energized by what they were building, put in untold hours without pay. Gloor points out that this is not altruism per se: participants in COINs are motivated by working with others, learning new skills, and making a difference. A new job or business opportunity may ultimately result from their efforts, but this is not why COIN members get involved.

In doing social network analyses of COINs, Gloor finds that their communication patterns demonstrate openness and transparency. Instead of having one person at the center controlling everything, meritocracy rules. Gloor predicts that COINs will become the dominant model for innovation. Just remember, he was right about the Oscars.

Digging Deeper

To learn more about coolhunting and COINs, read Gloor's book, *Coolhunting: Chasing Down the Next Big Thing*. For a regular dose of cool insights, check out Gloor's blog at swarmcreativity.blogspot.com. §

Deposit Your Ideas in MIT's New Bank

Inspired by Google Moderator, the Institute-wide Planning Task Force has established the MIT Idea Bank at ideabank.mit.edu. This web site is a forum for open discussion among members of the MIT community. Its focus is on ways to improve Institute operations while reducing expenses.

Once you log in with your MIT certificate, you can rank ideas in the database, sort them in various ways, and add your own ideas – anonymously if you prefer. MIT alumni can log in as well, using their Infinite Connection account.

Features

The MIT Idea Bank has several user-friendly features. It displays a list of the most recent ideas, along with **The Top Ten**. The **From the Vault** sidebar pulls up random ideas every time you refresh the home page, so that older ideas don't get lost.

When you're ready to add an idea, you are asked to choose from a set of categories – such as Procurement or Student Life.

When visitors to the Idea Bank click **View all deposits**, they are shown the full list of categories and can refine their search accordingly.

You can rank any idea by clicking one of the five stars next to it: one star is the lowest ranking and five stars the highest. You can also comment on any idea and read comments posted by others.

Building the Bank

To create the MIT Idea Bank, the Planning Task Force worked with two IS&T teams – Departmental Consulting and Application Development (DCAD) and Application Management and Integration (AMIT) – as well as with the Alumni Association. The site was built using Drupal, an open-source content management system. §



Information Services & Technology

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is&t is published six times a year. MIT faculty and staff receive copies through campus mail; *is&t* is also available in lobbies around campus. Individuals at MIT may subscribe by contacting the managing editor.

Send comments or subscription requests to:
MIT Room N42-290B, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Phone **617.253.0540**

Email **fizz@mit.edu**

is&t is published online at web.mit.edu/ist/istnews

The IS&T web site also offers frequent news updates on its home page or at web.mit.edu/ist/news.

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Software Spotlight

Hermes Speeds the Delivery of IT Answers

• Phyllis Galt

IS&T has launched a powerful new web application for getting answers to information technology (IT) questions. You can tap into this knowledge base, named Hermes, at kb.mit.edu.

Hermes enables all IT support providers at the Institute to contribute to the knowledge base. The benefit is that members of the MIT community looking for IT solutions can now search Hermes and retrieve the broadest possible results. It's a unique opportunity to accumulate and disseminate knowledge about IT products and services used at MIT.

Hermes works with IS&T-supported web browsers and uses MIT personal certificates to determine a community member's level of access. Once you're successfully logged into Hermes, your MIT Kerberos username appears in the upper-right corner. People without MIT certificates can access and search Hermes, but can't create articles or comment on them.

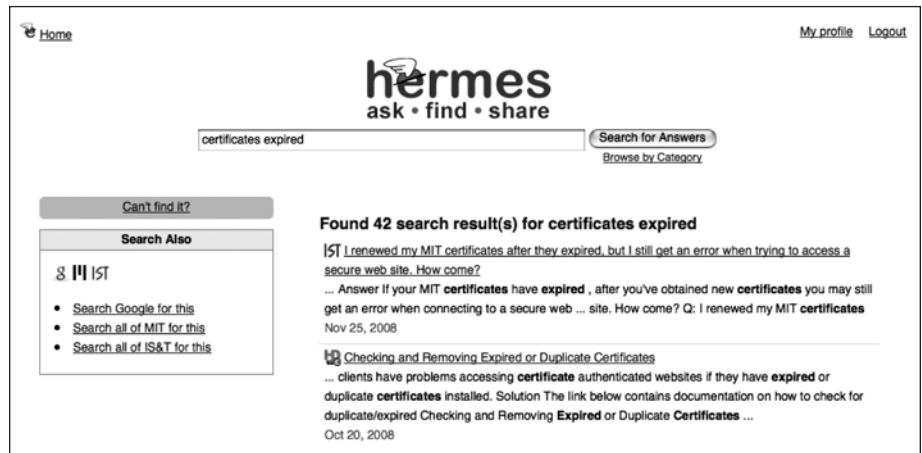
Note: Safari users should run the CertAid tool to add Hermes to their list of certificate-accessible sites. CertAid can be downloaded from web.mit.edu/software/mac.html.

What Makes Hermes Run?

Hermes runs on the Confluence enterprise wiki developed by Atlassian Software. (A wiki is a collection of web pages modifiable by anyone with relevant permissions.) The Confluence wiki was chosen both for the ability to allow many to contribute and modify content, and because its interface can be customized. IS&T designed and implemented an interface to meet various functional needs, including an easy-to-use search feature and icons that indicate the sources of contributions.

A Neighborhood of Spaces

Hermes makes use of a Confluence feature called "spaces." This makes it possible to provide relevant search results and article contribution capability, depending on your role at MIT. For example, the IS&T Stock



Searches in Hermes display results from multiple sources in one window.

Answers are now delivered via Hermes in their own space. IS&T consultants have permission to contribute stock answers and, as in the past, the stock answers are world-readable.

Additionally, there's a Community Contributions space where IT support providers at MIT can add content. These contributions are publicly viewable.

Search and Ye Shall Find

Hermes uses Google-like searching as a means to locate information. The results list for a query looks similar to most search engine results. An icon next to each item indicates in which space the article is housed. On the left, there are links to other search sources in the event you need to dig further. For example, you can search all of IS&T, all of MIT, and so on.

Hermes Wants Your Contributions

If you're an IT support provider at MIT, you have probably passed on tips or solutions to your group that may also be beneficial to the community at large. To start sharing this knowledge through Hermes, send a request for authoring permission to hermes-help@mit.edu.

Creating articles in Hermes is relatively easy. For guidelines, see Tech Tips on page 6.

Hermes Helps the IS&T Help Desk

For several years, the IS&T Computing Help Desk has used an internal knowledge base to search for answers to client questions and to document solutions as they're identified. Before Hermes, Help Desk consultants needed to execute multiple searches

to mine the internal knowledge base and IS&T Stock Answers. Hermes now provides seamless searching for Help Desk staff; it displays results that cut across the internal knowledge base, the IS&T Stock Answers, and Community Contributions.

One of the most exciting benefits of Hermes is the ability to quickly and easily share information more broadly. For example, Help Desk consultants can now move relevant content from the Help Desk internal space to the Community Contributions space.

Past and Future

In 2008, an IS&T cross-organizational group led by the Help Desk began designing Hermes. As part of the design process, IS&T solicited input from tech support providers across MIT. This input took the form of focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and usability testing.

Now that Hermes has been released, IS&T will continue to work on improving the system. Projects will focus on enhancing the search features and functionality to more closely meet the requirements identified in focus groups and testing.

In addition, IS&T will gradually open up Hermes to contributors from across the MIT community. An active community of contributors will enhance the effectiveness of MIT's new IT knowledge base.

Questions?

If you have questions about using Hermes, run into any problems, or want to find out about contributing content, send email to hermes-help@mit.edu. §



Network Notes

A Signal Challenge: Cellular Coverage at MIT

• Robyn Fizz and Joan Cyr

Over the past decade, cell phones have become essential to life at the Institute, both for daily business and the many research projects that focus on mobile devices. They may also serve as a critical source of communications during an emergency. Given the ubiquity and importance of mobile devices at MIT, why are cellular signals on campus so variable?

The short answer: the causes are complicated. Vendor relations, physical barriers, and technology issues all come into play.

Cellular Carriers

Cellular service providers – Verizon Wireless, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, and AT&T – are the primary factor in the coverage equation. While MIT operates its own networks – including the wireless network for computer communications and the on-campus phone system, now being converted to VoIP – it does not operate its own cellular service.



At this time, Verizon Wireless's outdoor coverage on campus is reasonably good. The other cellular carriers could improve their coverage by installing transmitters in strategic locations. But this isn't as simple as it sounds:

But this isn't as simple as it sounds:

- Each carrier requires a separate contract with MIT to install transmitters.
- Negotiations for transmitters involve not only the cellular carriers and various MIT departments – Facilities, IS&T, Procurement, and the Office of the General Counsel – but also the City of Cambridge, which grants permits for visible or rooftop structures.
- Transmitters must be sited where their frequencies won't disrupt research.
- The carriers have limited resources, and MIT isn't really a big customer: it has only about 600 accounts with Verizon and Sprint Nextel, and even fewer with AT&T and T-Mobile.

Buildings as Barriers

Buildings also impact cellular coverage at the Institute. MIT's campus is dense, and several building materials can impede outside signals from penetrating building exteriors. These include titanium outer shells, filtered glass windows, and older buildings with thick walls and heavy infrastructures. In addition, cell signals don't normally penetrate below ground; this is especially true for structures made of cement (e.g., garages).

New construction in close proximity to other buildings can weaken or block signals that used to get through. Clustered buildings (or clusters of people) can also cause unexpected voids in coverage. This occurs when a large number of mobile devices vie for the same carrier signals in a small space.

Evolving Technology

New smartphones and platforms – such as Apple's iPhone, Google Android, and Cisco's Mobility Services Engine – are changing the cellular landscape. Many analysts expect a migration of services to a converged platform using the IP data network. For now, with technology in flux, investments in cellular solutions need to be targeted and pragmatic.

Bridging the Gaps

To date, no department or group at MIT has been given the mandate or resources to tackle the challenge of ensuring consistent cellular coverage across campus.

IS&T has become the "go-to" group for cellular issues, since it provides the traditional and MITvoip phone services on campus. IS&T has heard a growing chorus of complaints from mobile device users at MIT; it's a frustrating experience for everyone.

While IS&T does not control cellular service at MIT, it has taken steps to try to improve the situation. These include working with the cellular carriers; helping to install in-building antenna systems; and exploring new technologies. The March/April Network Notes column will examine how these initiatives are helping to improve the environment for mobile device users at MIT.

Meanwhile, if you or your department has concerns about cellular coverage, send mail to cell-feedback@mit.edu. §



Bits and Bytes

This column presents announcements about IS&T-supported software. For more information about recent releases, see web.mit.edu/swrt.

Preparing for Microsoft's Upcoming Releases

This year promises to be a busy one for Microsoft, with releases of Internet Explorer 8 (IE8), Vista Service Pack 2 (SP2), and Windows 7. It will also be a busy time for the release teams in IS&T that will evaluate these products in the MIT environment.

While beta versions of IE8 and Windows 7 are already available for public download, IS&T recommends that community members wait to upgrade until their Department, Lab, or Center (DLC) is ready to make the transition. Beta versions should only be tested on non-production machines, due to possible instabilities with prerelease software.

IS&T has kicked off a project to evaluate the current beta of IE8 and invites those who have a test environment to participate. The focus of this IE8 evaluation is to

- Identify areas of potential impact on the MIT computing community
- Conduct tests of MIT web sites for functionality and certificate generation and usage
- Document and find possible workarounds for any conflicts or incompatibility issues

Findings can be sent to ie-release@mit.edu.

Vista SP2, which will be released this spring, is a standard cumulative service pack that includes all Vista hotfixes and security updates since SP1. Note that SP1 is a prerequisite for installing SP2.

Stay Current

To learn about new features of these coming releases, go to Microsoft's web site.

To follow the Software Release Team's efforts at MIT, go to their wiki at <https://wikis.mit.edu/confluence/display/SWRT> (certificates required). Under the Team Pages section, you'll see individual links for Microsoft Internet Explorer 8, Windows 7, and Windows Vista SP2. §



Safe Computing

Social Networking: It's Hot, But Don't Get Burned

• Monique Yeaton

A recent hack on Twitter – a service for posting short messages online – gave people plenty to twitter about. Compromised accounts were used to post damaging messages about their owners, many of them celebrities. “Facebookgate” made headlines when hackers used Facebook to set up fake groups at several colleges for the incoming class of 2013. MySpace has been hacked as well, exposing personal information.

These and other social networking sites help people connect online, but they do come with risks. Hacking is one cause for concern, although advances in security and identity management have made a difference. Closer to home, posting details of one’s life online can give everyone from prospective employers to stalkers access to personal information.

Despite these risks, many would say the advantages of social networking outweigh the potential downside. Tens of millions of people use sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter to stay connected with friends, family, and colleagues.

How to Protect Yourself

Typically, a user of a social networking site creates a bio that includes photos and interests. While each site has its own default privacy settings, the ability to view profiles is generally limited to accepted friends and networks. Users can make their privacy settings even more restrictive, if they prefer.

Beyond choosing friends wisely, a few common-sense measures can help reduce the risks of social networking:

Be thoughtful. Your online mistakes may come back to haunt you. White lies – such as misrepresenting job responsibilities – can stick around for years. In the same vein, don’t post photos or descriptions of yourself doing illegal or embarrassing things. Even if you delete these files, they may have been copied, posted elsewhere, or archived by Google.

Be discreet. Your personal and professional lives will overlap online to some extent, but it makes sense to try to keep them separate. Make career contacts on LinkedIn (a networking site for professionals). For sites like Facebook, set up two accounts – one for your profession and one for friends and old school buddies.

Be wary. People on the Internet are not always who they say they are. Until you can verify someone’s identity, don’t pass along any personal, business, or financial information.

Be skeptical. Be discriminating about which links you follow. You may get requests to visit bogus sites that are fraudulent or that barrage you with spam.

Check privacy policies. All major social network services publish privacy guidelines on their web sites. Take the time to read these pages, since they include the types of information that the social network site will reveal – or sell – to other parties, including spammers. If you don’t like the terms, don’t use the service. §

New IS&T Training Classes Focus on the Essentials

• Kevin James and Kate Kibbee

If you can’t afford to spend one or two days in a classroom, or would rather learn how to do specific tasks without learning software from the ground up, take a look at IS&T’s new *Essentials* offerings. These three-hour classes are designed for users who just need to know how to get specific tasks done.

The *Essentials* concept was originally conceived to cater to those who needed to use Adobe Photoshop, but were daunted by its depth and didn’t want to spend two days in the *Photoshop Basics* class. Participants in the *Photoshop Essentials* class liked this approach; in response, IS&T Training now has three offerings in place:

- *Photoshop Essentials* steps you through optimizing and manipulating photos for a newsletter, flier, or web site. *Fee:* \$90.
- *Web Site Maintenance Essentials* covers basic site management tasks and key practices for editing web pages with Dreamweaver. *Fee:* \$90.
- *Word 2007 Essentials* helps you control and customize Microsoft Word documents by setting defaults and using templates and formatting. *Fee:* none (Microsoft Word is considered a core application at MIT).

Given community interest in these targeted, hands-on classes, IS&T plans to create more *Essentials* offerings in the future.

To view all of IS&T’s training classes, go to the Computer Training at MIT page at web.mit.edu/ist/topics/training and select the **Training Catalog and Registration** link. You will be taken to the Training Tab in SAPweb Self Service. §

Element K: Free Web-Based Training for the MIT Community

Through its partner vendor, Element K, IS&T offers over 3,000 online courses. These range from office applications to advanced programming, networking, design, and media. There are two types of subscriptions offered: IT Office/Desktop and Professional. The Office/Desktop web-based training, available to the MIT community and affiliates, requires an email address ending in **.mit.edu**. The IT Professional subscription is reserved for MIT staff in IT support positions. To register for an Element K account, send email to wbt-request@mit.edu.

? Tech Tips: Hermes

This column presents tips about computing. For more information technology Q&As, check the IS&T Hermes knowledge database at kb.mit.edu.

Q. How do I get permission to create articles in Hermes?

A. IS&T is gradually opening up Hermes to a wider group of direct contributors, starting with IT support providers at MIT. If you help others on campus use computers and related technology, you can request permission to create and edit articles in Hermes by sending email to hermes-help@mit.edu.

Q. How do I create an article?

A. When you're ready to add content to Hermes, log in at kb.mit.edu. Look for your Kerberos username in the upper right corner; if you don't see it, click the **Login for more** link.

To create an article, click on the **Create a new article** link. You will be taken to a **Create** page, which has three steps:

1. First, enter a title for the article.
2. Next, if you have permission to create in more than one space, choose the preferred space from the drop-down menu.
3. Third, click on the link for the most appropriate type of article template. This will take you to the **Add Page** screen. Enter your content, making sure to add spaces between paragraphs. To insert a link, click the small globe-and-chain icon above the editing area. Click **Save** when you're done.

You can edit the article again at any time. To see if others add comments to your article or make changes, click the **Watch** link.

Q. How do I insert an image into my article?

A. You need to attach an image to an article before inserting it. Note that when creating a new article, the **Attach** link does not display until you click **Save**.

To attach an image, follow these steps.

1. In **View** or **Edit** mode, click the **Attach** link in the upper right.
2. In the **Attach** screen, click the **Browse** button to locate the file on your computer.
3. Select the image, then click **Open**.
4. Click the **Attach files** button.

Next, insert the image into the article.

1. In **Edit** mode, with your cursor in the spot where you want the image to display, click the small icon that looks like a mountain and sun. You will then see available image files attached to the article.
2. Click on the image you want to insert, and then click **OK**.



WebPub: Living the 2.0 Life

• Robyn Fizz

The Web Publishers user group at MIT has moved into high gear. Well-known speakers from the Web world are galvanizing WebPub's meetings. The group's web site at webpub.mit.edu features a blog, an RSS feed, and a blog-roll of favorite sites. The group even has a Twitter feed at twitter.com/mitwebpub.

webpub

If you work with the Web, you'll want to keep tabs on this MIT user group, managed by IS&T's Lisa Mayer. Its multifaceted audience includes web publishers, developers, designers, and writers. While most of the group's 300+ subscribers have .mit.edu addresses, the group is open to people outside the Institute – from colleagues at nearby universities to those in industry who see MIT as a leader in the Web realm.

Tuned into Trends

WebPub meetings include “how-to” presentations, but the group is equally tuned in to new trends – applications and services that web publishers can use on their web sites. In posts to the group's blog, Mayer steers clear of well-known web phenomena like Facebook, focusing instead on up-and-coming players like Ning, a free web service where you can make your own social network.

Mark Your Calendars

The WebPub group meets the fourth Thursday of most months from noon to 1 pm in the N42 Demo Center.

At the March 26 meeting, Neal Kane from Libretto will talk about writing for the Web. On May 28, renowned usability expert Jared Spool is the featured speaker.

Starting in 2009, WebPub meetings are being captured on video. If you can't attend a meeting, you can watch the presentation online at your convenience. For example, the January 22 WebPub meeting featured John Resig, the creator of the jQuery JavaScript library. To view the

podcast of Resig's presentation, go to tinyurl.com/webpub-resig-jquery. The WebPub podcast is hosted on MIT TechTV, Odeo, and iTunes.

Coming Up

Over the next few months, WebPub will leap ahead even further. Mayer plans to add a WebPub group to Facebook and create an RSS gadget for iGoogle. Her goal is to make the group a resource for web publishers in academia. She also wants to encourage members to support each other – using their collective experience to answer questions posted by individual members.

Email List and Contact Info

WebPub has a moderated email list. Members can send mail directly to the list; non-members can send mail, but it must be approved before it is posted. To subscribe to the WebPub list, sign up at mailman.mit.edu/mailman/listinfo/webpub.

If you have questions about WebPub or ideas for future directions, contact manager Lisa Mayer at lmayer@mit.edu. §

Next Billion Network B(rings) Power to the People

• Lee Ridgway

In April 2008, the Media Lab launched the Next Billion Network under Director Jhonatan Rotberg. The Next Billion Network, or NBN, takes its name from the projection that, within the next few years about a billion people in developing countries will become users of mobile phones.

In most of these regions, regular phone service is not widespread and there is little access to computers and the Internet. With mobile devices, the “next billion” can benefit from connecting to the global information network.

NBN’s developers and advisors believe that communications and information technology can contribute to social and economic good. The NBN sees its work as an opportunity to develop and deliver applications and services for mobile devices that can make a difference in the lives of some of the world’s poorest people.

With technology literally in their hands, members of low-income communities can sell crops, engage in business, or find work. They are also better equipped to access health services, education and training, and basic financial services.



NextLab

The development wing of NBN is NextLab, a two-term, hands-on course at MIT. Each fall, student teams create prototypes of mobile technologies that address specific needs of low-income communities. To identify needs, the NBN works in partnership with local organizations that know the people in a community and their environment.

As part of the fall term’s work, the student teams develop sustainability plans to ensure the long-term success of their projects. Students are then eligible for funding to take a field trip to their target communities during IAP to test and refine their prototypes.

NextLab’s spring term focuses on implementing the technologies and executing

business plans to create ventures. Ventures enable the scaling up of mobile applications for deployment to developing countries around the world.

NextLab projects address a wide range of needs. Examples include

- Helping farmers in Mexico communicate to establish equitable pricing for their crops
- Using cell-phone photography to assist in screening for cervical cancer in Zambia
- Providing a disaster management tool for relief workers in India

Although NextLab projects are targeted initially at specific countries, the emphasis is on building technologies that can help hundreds of millions of people. By making mobile applications that are simple to use, people in developing countries will have access to resources not otherwise available to them.

Explore

For more on the Next Billion Network, go to nextbillion.mit.edu.

For details and videos about NextLab projects, see nextlab.mit.edu. §

Two Organizations Help Peers Connect Around IT in Education

• Robyn Fizz

The NorthEast Regional Computing Program (NERCOMP) is all about networking: it’s an association of information technology (IT) users from over 240 colleges and universities throughout the Northeast. It offers an annual conference, workshops, software licensing discounts, professional development, and opportunities to collaborate with peers.

MIT’s Involvement in NERCOMP

MIT was a founding member of NERCOMP, and Institute staff are still active. Amitava “Babi” Mitra (babi@mit.edu) is currently a Board member and Christine Fitzgerald (cavanna@mit.edu) is the MIT Institutional Representative. Others from MIT lead various seminars, and over 100 MIT staff subscribe to NERCOMP’s mailing list.

Many MIT staff also attend NERCOMP’s annual conference: this year’s will be held from March 9 to 11 in Providence, Rhode Island. The theme is *Creative Intersections, Wise Collaborations, and Sustainable Technology*. One of the featured speakers is John Maeda, a former Associate Director at the MIT Media Lab and now President of the Rhode Island School of Design. Maeda will give a talk on Open-Source Administration.

If you work with computers, consider signing up for this conference. It’s a great way to expand your knowledge of many IT topics – from cloud computing, to the future of libraries, to leveraging collective intelligence.

NERCOMP also runs special interest groups (SIGs), which sponsor one-day seminars. Upcoming sessions include a *Spring Security Camp*, *Widgets in Education*, and *Multimedia Project Support*.

You can learn more about NERCOMP – and sign up for its mailing list – at nercomp.org. If you decide to register for an event, be sure to take advantage of MIT’s member rate.



Under the EDUCAUSE Umbrella

NERCOMP connects with broader educational initiatives through its affiliation with EDUCAUSE – a national organization that advances higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. MIT is a member of EDUCAUSE.

The EDUCAUSE web site at educause.edu is well worth bookmarking. It offers a wealth of information about EDUCAUSE initiatives and publications, as well as opportunities for professional development. It also features the Popular Resources sidebar, with links to the *7 Things You Should Know About...* series, which covers everything from alternate reality games to lecture-capture systems.

Individuals in the MIT community are welcome to subscribe to EDUCAUSE Online, a free email service with synopses of news on the web site. For related blogs, podcasts, and wikis, check out EDUCAUSE CONNECT at connect.educause.edu. §



Getting Help

If you don't know where to get help for your computer, network, or telephone problems, dial one of the help lines listed to the right.

If you prefer to use email, you can send your questions to the corresponding email addresses. (When logged into Athena, you can also use the **olc** command to send questions to Athena's online consultants.)

You can also submit a question online via the Request Tracker link on the Getting Help page at web.mit.edu/ist/help.

For help with...	Dial...	Or send a message to...
General computing questions Macintosh, Windows, network/connectivity, business applications, computer buying advice, repairs	617.253.1101	computing-help@mit.edu
Athena computing environment	617.253.4435	olc@mit.edu
Disabilities and computing	617.253.7808	atic@mit.edu
Telephone support and repairs Traditional and MITvoip phones	617.253.4357	telephone-help@mit.edu
Traditional phone moves/changes For use by AOs/DLC administrators	617.253.3670	telecom-csr@mit.edu
Unix/Linux	617.253.1103	unix-linux-help@mit.edu





Surf Sites: Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is mainstream. Facebook, Flickr, Google, YouTube, Twitter, and Wikipedia are household names. A virtual cascade of new sites encourages connection, collaboration, and sharing.

To stay current with Web 2.0 trends, bookmark readwriteweb.com. And to keep up with the latest Web buzz, check out popurls.com or alltop.com.

You may also enjoy exploring some of the sites on the right, which use Web 2.0 technologies to share, learn, or enhance productivity in cool new ways.

- LibraryThing – Catalog Your Books Online**
librarything.com
- Livemocha – Learn Languages Online**
livemocha.com
- Ning – Create Your Own Social Network for Anything**
ning.com
- Pandora – Listen to Free Internet Radio, Find New Music**
pandora.com
- Slideshare – Share Your PowerPoint Presentations**
slideshare.net
- Vimeo – Video Sharing for You**
vimeo.com
- Zoho – Work. Online.**
zoho.com


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