

Bull, G., Sprague, D., & Bell, L. (2001). Establishing a Technology and Teacher Education Digital Scholarship Portal. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* [Online Serial], 1(4) 445-450.

Establishing a Technology and Teacher Education Digital Scholarship Portal

GLEN BULL

University of Virginia

DEBRA SPRAGUE

George Mason University

LYNN BELL

University of Virginia

The National Technology Leadership Initiative (NTLI) is a partnership undertaken by five teacher educator associations representing core content areas and educational technology. The goal of NTLI is to establish cross-disciplinary connections among these disciplines. Partners include the Association for the Education of Teachers in Science (AETS), the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE), the National Council of English Teachers Conference on English Education (CEE), the National Council for the Social Studies College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA), and the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE). These organizations have convened two *National Technology Leadership Retreats* (NTLR I and II) that examined best practices and developed draft guidelines for use of technology in teacher education in each content area.

The leadership retreats brought together the presidents, executive directors, and other leaders of more than a dozen national education associations to consider how future teachers might be best prepared to appropriately integrate technology into their teaching. As one consequence of this collaboration, the *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education (CITE) Journal* was established as a joint venture of the five teacher educator associations. Establishment of a joint educational journal representing these five academic areas is unprecedented and has no parallel in either print or online publications.

Journal Background

In 1990 Jerry Willis and Dee Anna Willis founded SITE to provide an academic home for those working to integrate educational technology into teacher education. The Association for Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), publisher of educational technology journals (*Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching*, *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, *WebNet Journal* (Online), *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, *Information Technology in Childhood Education Annual*, *Educational Technology Review* (Online), and the *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*) now serves as the administrative arm of SITE.

Jerry Willis served as the founding editor of a journal established to support SITE, the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*. When he assumed editorship of this journal, he expressed the

hope that 'all of us will look back on the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education* as a publication that helped define the field of information technology and teacher education.'

PT3 Journal Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Education *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology* (PT3) initiative offered the opportunity to establish an online journal, *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* (*CITE Journal*), an electronic counterpart to *JTATE*. As its name, 'Contemporary Issues,' suggests, information of immediate interest to readers can be made available in a more timely fashion than is possible with print media. In addition, *CITE Journal* provides an opportunity to include multimedia materials such as sound, video, and animation, and incorporates a commentary function to allow readers to respond to published articles.

Debra Sprague has agreed to serve as Jerry's successor as the next editor of *JTATE*. Debra is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University. Debra has been active in the U.S. Department of Education *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology* (PT3) program, and is principal investigator of a PT3 grant at George Mason University. Most importantly, she will bring many of the same qualities of innovation and professional curiosity to the editorship to of *JTATE* that have made it successful under Jerry Willis's stewardship.

Her interests in use of scholarly publications and research to foster dialog within the academic community parallel similar interests within the editorial board of the *CITE Journal*. Consequently, this editorial transition seemed an appropriate time to rethink the relationship among all of SITE's print and electronic publications.

Building Community and Synergistic Relationships

Jerry Willis and Dee Anna Willis established SITE to foster a sense of community among academicians who were exploring the new task of preparing teachers to incorporate emerging technologies into teaching practice. At first it was possible for every single member to know and interact with every other member. As the educational technology society has grown, some of this early sense of community has been less feasible through direct personal contact and interactions at conferences and meetings. If any group should have the capacity to build a virtual community that extends direct personal interactions it should be a professional association of educational technologists.

We envision a web site that serves as a 'portal' for all of SITE's print and electronic publications, as well as discussion and scholarly dialog associated with them. The portal would become an access point for digital scholarship related to technology and teacher education. Figure 1 is a prototype of the interface.

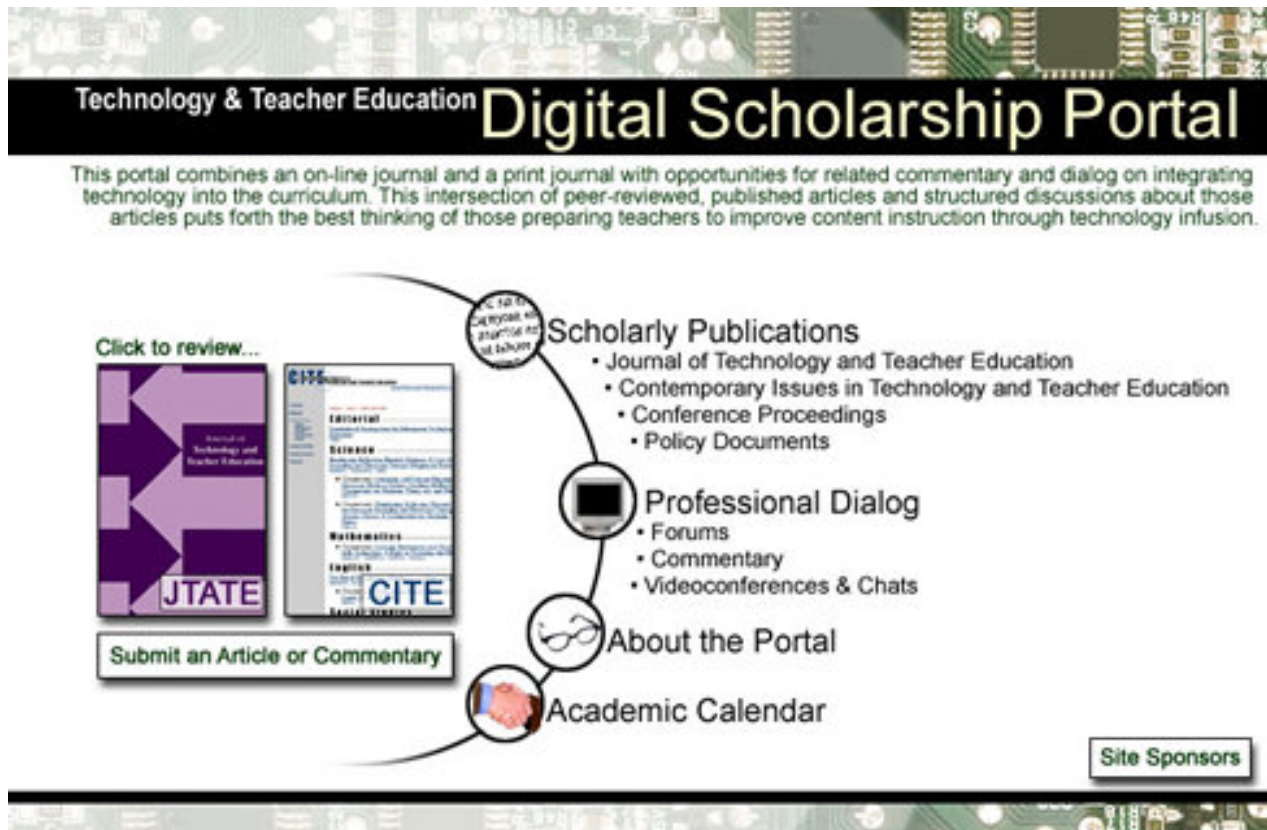


Figure 1. Prototype of digital scholarship portal

This portal will include a link to an integrated submissions process for both *JTATE* and *CITE Journal*. This common online submission screen will include a brief overview and explanation of the print and online journals and their functions, with options to submit an article to either of the two. A third option of 'unsure' or 'doesn't matter' will allow authors to request that the article be submitted to the most appropriate venue, to be determined by the editors. This implies a coordinated editorial board, which should benefit both authors and association members.

Also available from this portal will be access to newly established interactive journal discussion groups. The primary purpose of these discussion groups will be to help re-establish a sense of community and allow every author to be directly connected with and have input into the common community. Debra Sprague has agreed to take the lead on establishment of these discussion groups.

The discussion groups would also serve to encourage scholarly dialog initiated in these publications. Currently, readers of *CITE Journal* have the opportunity to respond to an article by submitting a commentary that is published as an article in its own right. These commentaries undergo the same process of peer review as the original articles. However, taking advantage of an electronic medium, commentaries and responses are posted immediately after acceptance. This feature will ideally generate discussion strands similar to this example from the inaugural issue:

- If We Didn't Have the Schools We Have Today, Would We Create the Schools We Have Today? ' Thomas G. Carroll
- Commentary: Some Comments on 'If We Didn't Have the Schools We Have Today, Would We Create the Schools We Have Today?' ' Gerald Bracey

- Commentary: Technology, Learning, and Schools: Comments on Articles by Tom Carroll and Gerald Bracey ' John Bransford, Xiadong Lin, and Dan Schwartz.
- Commentary: The Paradigm behind the Curtain: Comments on Papers by Carroll; Bracey; and Bransford, Lin, & Schwartz ' Jerry Willis

The base article by Tom Carroll generated a response in the form of a commentary by Gerald Bracey. Bracey's commentary, in turn, generated further commentaries by Bransford, et al., and by Willis. As a matter of editorial policy, we have established a high scholarly standard for commentaries about articles, as well as the articles themselves. As a next phase of the online journal, we envision less formal asynchronous discussion groups that will permit ongoing conversation and discussion that does not undergo scholarly peer review. One important academic implication of this approach is that a commentary would be included in annual reports and curriculum vitae, just as any other peer-reviewed publication would be, while contributions to ongoing discussion groups would not. Thus, a base article on a given topic might give rise to formal refereed commentaries responding to it, as well as less formal discussion strands. Ideally, this dialog might ultimately lead to future articles derived from discussion with colleagues.

- Base Article 1
 - Commentaries
 - Discussion Groups

- Base Article 2

An integrated approach to the print and online journals suggests a common set of discussion groups equally applicable to both. Experience with online discussion groups suggests that achieving a critical mass and generating substantive interactions can be difficult. For that reason, discussion groups will initially be led by moderators who will have the task of encouraging and facilitating dialogue. Moderators will ideally have academic credentials related to the topic under discussion and will be able to identify and contact others with expertise who may be able to contribute and advance the discussion.

If the interactive discussion groups prove successful, other features of a virtual scholarly community might be added, such as the opportunity to interact with authors through videoconferencing at this site. In addition, other publications and scholarship, such as the published proceedings of the annual SITE conference, will be made available through this portal. If the portal is successful, it will begin to reestablish the sense of scholarly community and academic connections that constituted the original rationale for founding SITE and extend it in ways that would not be possible without interactive communication technologies.

The Technology and Teacher Education *Digital Scholarship Portal* (DSP) also provides a mechanism for publishing the ideas and best practices emerging from the numerous PT3 initiatives. The appended diagram illustrates one way in which the linkage between PT3 scholarly output and the Digital Scholarship Portal might be established (see Figure 2).

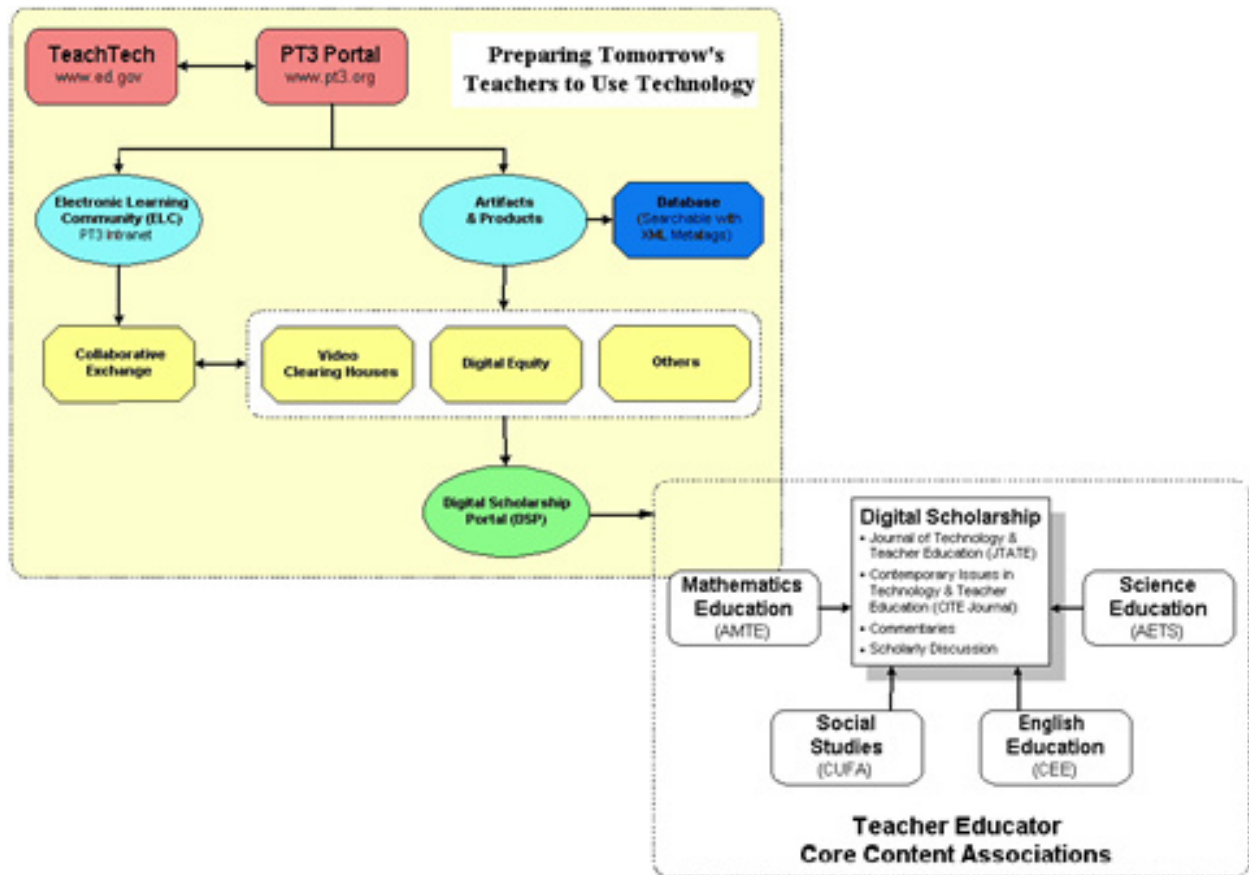


Figure 2. Diagram of proposed link between the digital scholarship portal and the PT3 web site

Cross-Disciplinary Connections

To be effective, the core of teacher educators who prepare future teachers must be included in educational technology initiatives. Many of these individuals participate in the professional conferences in their home academic disciplines (e.g., science education, mathematics education, English education, and social studies education) but do not typically attend conferences that have educational technology as a primary focus.

Collaboration associated with the National Technology Leadership Initiative has led to the establishment of educational technology committees in two of the four teacher educator associations. The leaders of existing educational technology committees of the other two associations have now begun collaborating with their counterparts in other associations. In addition, the annual meetings of all four associations representing the core content areas have incorporated educational technology strands. It will be important to build upon and extend the ties among the teacher educator associations in these areas, as well as other content areas.

We are considering several strategies for advancing cross-disciplinary discussion about technology

in teacher preparation. One concept is a cross-publishing strategy, in which authors publishing in their content area journals could refer to a sister article published in *CITE Journal* or *JTATE*. For instance, a bibliography of technology and science education articles could be published in *CITE Journal*, while a literature review based on this bibliography could be submitted to a science education journal, such as the *Journal of Science Teacher Education*.

We are also proposing a new initiative that will build upon our cross-disciplinary efforts. NTLI is proposing to sponsor an annual award to recognize an exemplary paper presented in the technology strand at the annual meetings of AETS, AMTE, CEE, and CUFA. If approved by the associations, recipients of the award will receive a plaque, an invitation to give an invited presentation at the SITE conference, a complimentary SITE conference registration and \$1,000 to partially defray travel expenses, and a review of the exemplary paper for publication in the *CITE Journal*, if the author desires. (The respective professional societies for science, mathematics, English and social studies education have sole responsibility for editorial review of articles published in their discipline in *CITE Journal*.)

Summary

The success of the PT3 initiative and other ventures designed to prepare teachers to appropriately incorporate technology in their teaching will ultimately depend upon the university faculty who prepare these teachers. One way of reaching this audience is through their professional associations and the associated conferences they regularly attend.

The National Technology Leadership Initiative has brought together the leaders of the teacher educator associations in the core content areas. Educational technology committees have been established in each organization, and educational technology strands have been incorporated into their annual conferences. The organizations have jointly sponsored an online journal.

The Technology and Teacher Education *Digital Scholarship Portal* (DSP) is the next step in this cross-disciplinary collaboration. It will facilitate and encourage dialog related to print and online publications, and provide another mechanism for disseminating research and findings stemming from the PT3 initiatives. The success of this venture will ultimately depend not upon electronic webs, but upon social and professional networks.

The technology, as always, should be a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education is an online journal. All text, tables, and figures in the print version of this article are exact representations of the original. However, the original article may also include video and audio files, which can be accessed on the World Wide Web at <http://www.citejournal.org>