

# ITEC seeks to integrate web technology in the classroom

by Natalie Pendergast

The old stereotype of students struggling to keep up with their studying may soon be stifled by a startling new project.

ITEC, the university's Information Technology Education Centre is teaming up with the library resources to bring forth a new program.

"Some of the students at the university are now using ITEC to learn how to use electronic media for class presentations." ITEC director, Bill Robertson said about how most students benefit from the centre. In addition to the electronic media available from ITEC, students may also take advantage of the training programs offered.

"ITEC has run a summer institute for the last three years that teaches students quite a range of multimedia skills." Robertson said, adding that the main function of ITEC is to design and maintain web pages.

But according to Robertson, ITEC is about to emerge with something new.

"We're going to start a very special project in a couple of weeks," Robertson said. "Two of the staff members are going to work with the librarian on [it] to help as many of the professors as possible to have a web presence in their course." Whether large or small, it is important that there is some use of ITEC's web resources in most subjects, he added.

"The objective is to try and get most of the faculty looking at new technologies and using it wherever it makes sense in their courses." Robertson hopes the new project will come into effect in early November and will become more and more popular over the next two years.

Robertson feels the new project will greatly benefit stu-

dents. "[Students] will have a record of everything they have to do on the web site." This site will include a detailed course outline, notes for each class, discussion topics on-line, as well as future course information.

"You can study ahead of class; you don't have to be a stenographer quite as much as you are now," Robertson said.

He noted that the on-line class discussion method is a key plus of the project. "In Business 482 more than half the grade is on discussion the class gets into on-line," explained Robertson. This enables professors to simply post a topic and allow the students to reply on their own time.

"You get a chance to think about your comment rather than dump it out quickly, just off the top of your head."

John Crossley, Vice President Academic, agrees that on-line communicating is advantageous for students. "It will provide e-mail lists for students and professors to communicate back and forth," he said of the ITEC project. "And I find a lot of students are more comfortable doing that than coming and talking to their profs."

Crossley's political studies 311 course is outlined on its web page. Crossley finds his students not only benefit from a more convenient means of communicating, but also from an additional, more relaxed method of getting potentially missed notes. "Rather than people having to write down all of my course overheads or photocopy them in the library, I just post them up for people to download them."

ITEC is putting the web pages together but they couldn't have done it without the Robertson Library resources.

"The library is very

involved in instructional services." said UPEI Librarian Lynn Murphy. These services teach students how to use the databases. "And we're already partnering off with some of the faculty in doing some of the teaching of how to do research."

Murphy said that since not every course necessarily needs a web page, there is no guarantee as to how extensively outlined each course will be. "Where the faculty feel they need a web interface for the students, the IT project will assist in helping to facilitate it."

According to Murphy, the IT project wasn't just a random idea that ITEC is experimenting with. "Last year we did a study of planning of curriculums for students and this idea was a result of that study."

Some students are unsure

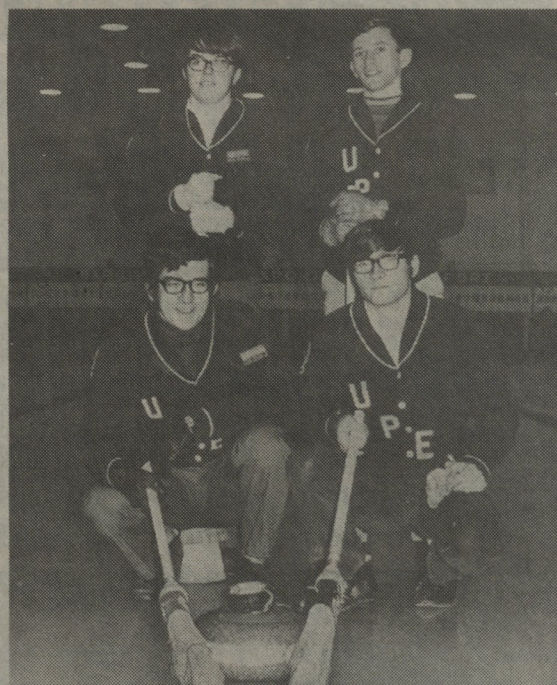
of the new project.

"I can see how it would have some redeeming qualities," Third year Arts student, John Fleming said of the IT project, "But I can also see how it may not necessarily help relations between students and professors. There would perhaps be a little less interaction there, and that in itself is probably one of the most redeeming qualities of a smaller university."

Crossley and Robertson feel they have nothing to lose in launching this new idea. The IT project will be the topic of a faculty meeting taking place later in the week.

Murphy estimates November 6 will be the date that the program will come into effect.

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