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BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN RURAL COMMUNTIES

Lisa Dennis*

ABSTRACT:
PowerUp Computer Lab: PowerUp is organized and operated for the purpose of assisting under-served youth to obtain the skills, experiences and resources required to succeed in the digital age. It's activities are aimed at five promises identified by America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth as being key to building character and competence of our young people; caring adults; safe places; marketable skills; and opportunities to serve. Somerset County Maryland received this grant and obtained twenty Gateway computers and high-speed Internet access for a rural community who did not even have computer access in its schools. Our Local Project: The project in Somerset County, Maryland has the following goals: to utilize existing Extension programs to provide better access to community members through the internet, building e-commerce sites for individuals to market local products, teaching the elderly computer skills to build and maintain Websites and domains and working with the agriculture and waterman communities to bridge the digital divide. This grant allows the Crisfield Community to have the opportunity to enrich their population through technology by utilizing youth and adult partnerships to enhance educational and business opportunities. In this presentations discussion will include the process involved in gaining community support. The do's and don'ts for undertaking such a huge endeavor and maintaining sustainability.

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ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY LITERACY THROUGH GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEMS PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH IN NORTHWEST INDIANA

Scott Foster* and Tracy George

ABSTRACT:
The Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service has been involved in developing and providing a Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) program for its 4-H members in Northwest Indiana. The goal for such programs is to provide hands-on activities for youth which will enhance their technological literacy in these areas; whether they are combined or used separately. The continuation of GIS and GPS workshops for youth will also assist Educators in developing and utilizing an evaluation tool to measure the technological skills learned in these programs. GIS can be utilized to demonstrate land-use changes and the impacts that it can have on the environment in the communities in which participating youth live. Data sets to show such trends are provided by The Purdue University Center for Advanced Applications in GIS (CAAGIS). CAAGIS has developed electronic data sets for all 92 counties in Indiana, but have been seldom utilized by Extension programs for youth. Purdue Extension is now taking the next step in developing a viable program that will teach Extension educators and youth throughout Indiana to become technologically literate in both areas. The following poster presentation will demonstrate how youth have utilized GIS and GPS in two workshops in Northwest Indiana during 2002. Local high school 4-H members participated in MyCOE (My Community, Our Earth) to evaluate poor land use development decisions in Northwest Indiana; and "December at the Dunes", where 4-H members incorporated GPS and GIS to study the Indiana Dunes State Park.

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THE ACCESS E-NONPROFITS CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT:
The eNonprofits curriculum is intended to help nonprofits make the most of their Internet connection and Web presence. It is about making smart business choices that meet the needs of clients, patrons, or members. It's primary audience is the smaller nonprofits with limited budgets but big ideas. The Web-based curriculum is organized into four components: (1) eNonprofits is a backgrounder covering nonprofit and Internet basics, how nonprofits can and do use the Net, and the business, social, and technical issues affecting nonprofits online. (2) Learning and Using the Net explores the free and inexpensive tools available to nonprofits online like Email, search engines, and various business applications. For many nonprofits these services are as important as or more so than establishing a Website. (3) Creating an Online Presence includes planning, designing, creating, maintaining, and promoting a Website. The emphasis here is on managing Web content and expenses. (4) Business Plan features worksheets and checklists that help users put the material learned in the tutorial to use. We will discuss our experience using this curriculum, and how it complements the Access e-government and e-business programs.

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PLAN WELL, RETIRE WELL

Pat Hildebrand* and Ellen Burton

ABSTRACT:
Many people approach their retirement years with sufficient savings and wealth to ensure a secure lifestyle after their working years, while many other middle-income individuals and families have little or no savings for retirement. In order to assist Illinois residents to plan and effectively save for their long-term security, the University of Illinois Extension' Consumer and Family Economics Team is implementing the Plan Well, Retire Well education program. The goal of the program is to assist middle-income individuals, 25 to 50 years of age, to plan effectively for retirement. A unique feature of this program is that it targets young individuals and emphasizes the importance of setting financial goals and saving early for retirement. To develop an effective retirement and savings program, a variety of research methods were used to gather information: previous research was taken into consideration; one-on-one interviews were conducted with financial experts around the country; a storyboard exercise was used to gather information from educators throughout Illinois; and a series of focus groups were conducted with Illinois residents. There are four key components to this web-based, interactive program: Time Value of Money, Investment Strategies, Tax-Deferred Retirement Savings, Goals and Decision-making. The aim is to clearly and concisely present retirement concepts and make this information easily accessible and user friendly to younger audiences. The first priority is to reach Illinois residents and then extend the program beyond Illinois. Currently, programmers are designing the website which will soon be available at: http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/cfe.

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THE USE OF TELEVISION, VIDEO, AND THE INTERNET TO ENHANCE EXTENSION OUTREACH AND PROGRAMS: THE "IF PLANTS COULD TALK" TELEVISION SERIES AND WORLDWIDE WEBSITE FOR NJN-PBS

William T. Hlubik*

ABSTRACT:
Television and the internet have become two of the primary sources for communication and information gathering for the general public in the United States. Television, video and the Internet can therefore provide excellent multimedia tools to help cooperative extension professionals educate a diverse and constantly expanding clientele. Properly designed multimedia products can be used repeatedly and repackaged for various clientele, thus extending an educator's outreach and saving precious time. Well designed projects can also bring recognition required for promotion and career development. Project documentation in video form can also be used to secure needed funds from political leaders, agribusiness, and other organizations. There are many opportunities to partner with local and regional television stations as well as other organizations to create and distribute video and Internet products for the public. We will discuss various multimedia opportunities for Extension professionals. In this presentation we will review the creation and development of our teams NJN PBS Series on horticultural and environmental issues called "If Plants Could Talk." The IPCT PBS TV series and web site has extended extension outreach to over 7.8 million potential viewers and has won 10 state, regional and national awards within the past three years. The IPCT web site has received over 5 million hits since it's creation.

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IMPROVE YOUR PROGRAM PLANNING, PROMOTION, AND DELIVERY WITH GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) SOFTWARE

Jim Kahler*

ABSTRACT:
Are you still using a map on the wall to record your Extension program sites, client groups, and community information? GIS software can be a powerful tool for learning more about your community and county and putting that information to work. Are areas with a high youth population being served by 4-H programs? Where are the families who earn their income from agriculture? Are your EFNEP and FSNEP programs accessible to your low income populations? Where would be the best places to reach minority residents more effectively? GIS software, using data that is available for little or no cost, can help you to answer these kinds of questions and do much more. This hands-on session will help you to begin to explore the possibilities for using GIS software in your work. You will learn about the tools that are now available to the Cooperative Extension System and other resources that you can get online. Make your program planning, promotion, and delivery more efficient and effective with GIS!

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ONE PLAN SOFTWARE FOR DEVELOPING NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS

Robert Ohlensehlen*

ABSTRACT:
The increased pressure to improve the management of nutrients in the production of crops to protect water quality, both surface water and ground water, has increased the need for development of nutrient management plans. The Idaho State Legislature has instituted a requirement that all beef and dairy operations have approved nutrient management plans in place by 2001 for dairies, and by 2005 for beef and dairy feedlot facilities. A committee of professionals from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, US EPA, the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality and the University of Idaho Extension System were assembled to evaluate the possibility of development of a software package to automate the preparation of comprehensive nutrient management plans. The result of nearly 3 years of reviewing available software and the development of a software program to prepare nutrient management plans is the "One Plan" nutrient management planning software. "One Plan" utilizes GIS maps of the area to incorporate site-specific information on soils, underlying materials, climate, basin/sub-basin hydrological information, surface water and subsurface water information. The information from the Digital Ortho Quarter Quad maps such as the field and site information is used in conjunction with the GIS data to prepare a plan. Crop rotation, irrigation information and field application information input by the planner complete the information used to prepare a plan that is submitted electronically to the Idaho Department of Agriculture where the data is included in the state database for monitoring and regulatory tracking.

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PUTTING THE "WWW" IN EXTENSION PROGRAMMING: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE COUNTY EXTENSION WEBSITE

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ABSTRACT:
The Internet is a popular and powerful way of reaching out to underserved youth and adults that do not have a current link to county Extension programs; it is also a way to effectively provide continuing service to existing clients. A well-planned county Extension Website is a powerful tool for reaching time-stressed individuals who have grown accustomed to "information on demand" from other Internet sources. Many of these clientele are simply too busy to call or visit the county Extension office during normal business hours, or they may be leery of contacting the extension office for the very first time. With this in mind, county Extension website planning must keep the Internet users' needs in focus. Websites must provide valuable, timely information through a design that offers navigational ease. In other words, reliable, educational information should be "easy to find, the first time." Once a user-friendly Website has been established, the task of marketing the site becomes paramount to its success. Marketing a website without a great deal of capital can be quite challenging. However, there are many simple steps that can be taken to market a Website to clientele and to underserved populations of the county. This workshop will provide insight for improved integration of an Extension Website into county programming and will offer discussion for participants who currently have county Websites and would like to leverage their Web presence to better market Extension programs.

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FINANCIAL FITNESS QUIZ: IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION EDUCATORS

Barbara O'Neill*

ABSTRACT:
Many Extension educators, particularly in agriculture and family and consumer sciences, are in a position to teach or advise clientele about their finances. This often involves some type of assessment tool. Periodic financial check-ups are as important as annual physicals in assessing current behavior, diagnosing problems before they become worse, and identifying uncovered risk exposures. This research report describes the results of data collected via an Extension online Financial Fitness Quiz from 2000 to 2002. The Financial Fitness Quiz has two primary purposes: to provide users with instant feedback on their financial fitness and to generate data to support empirical research about participants' financial behavior. The Financial Fitness Quiz Web page provides general statements about users' financial fitness, based on their overall score. Respondents also receive specific suggestions for improvement based on their responses to each of the questions. This workshop will discuss consistent research findings about financial behaviors over the past three years and implications for Extension educators.

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INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE USES OF GIS AND GPS BY YOUTH

Tom Tate*

ABSTRACT:
Young people are attracted to high-tech. 4-H members and other youth are doing amazing things with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Software (GIS). Whether hiking along a trail, studying the ecology of a forest, or mapping important sites in a downtown area, young people are exploring the possibilities of GIS and GPS technologies. This session will highlight some examples of how youth programs are integrating GIS and GPS into their programs. You will be able to use some of these tools to learn about what they do and discuss ideas about how you can integrate GIS and GPS into your programs, too! Participants and others can find out more about what 4-H youth and Extension are doing with technology, GPS, and GPS at: http://www.tnstate.edu/carp/gisgps/main.htm, and http://www.4-h.org/tech/.

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