

FOR RELEASE

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CLASS WRITING BLOGS INCREASE YUKON STUDENTS' LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WHITEHORSE – More and more, Yukon students are entering the “blogisphere” of the World Wide Web as class writing blogs are becoming a very popular, interactive learning tool in Yukon classrooms.

“The Department of Education is being proactive about introducing students to blogging because entering the ‘blogisphere’ presents many teachable moments,” Education Minister John Edzerza said. “More and more educators in Canada are embracing the Internet as a way of enhancing learning opportunities.”

“Yukon students have the best access to computers and high speed Internet when compared to students in jurisdictions across Canada – so we certainly have the educational capacity to support unique projects like class writing blogs,” Edzerza added.

Class writing blogs are collaborative web pages. Each student has their own area to post their work. Teachers check student work and release it to the blog for public consumption. Interested members of the public are welcome to join the blog and give feedback on the students’ work by using the link at the end of each story.

“Students receive well-supervised instruction on how to use blogs and the Internet safely and responsibly. They develop lifelong learning skills such as improved information acquisition skills, critical thinking, and increased ability to provide constructive feedback on peer produced work,” Education’s technology assisted learning consultant, Cam Good said.

While the Department of Education is constantly opening doors to new technologies for students, great care is taken to ensure student safety.

“Giving students access to the Internet poses similar benefits and risks as giving students access to a swimming pool,” Good said. “Students who are taught to ‘swim’ effectively on the internet can take those skills and enhance their lifelong learning opportunities in a safe and responsible manner. Students swimming without any guidance can pose considerable risks to themselves and others.”

“Exposure to new technology and increased connectivity not only increases student learning opportunities, but also it will make students more successful, resourceful individuals later on in life,” Edzerza said.

To look at a recent class writing blog from Takhini Elementary visit: <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/takpilotblog/>

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Backgrounder attached.

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BACKGROUND

- Yukon students have the best access to computers in their schools when compared to students across Canada, according to a national report issued by Statistics Canada on information and communications technologies (ICT) on June 10, 2004 (www.statcan.ca). The study indicated that on average every 2.9 Yukon students have access to 1 computer with high speed internet access at their school. The national ratio of students to computers is 5.5:1.
- The Pew Internet survey released in November 2005 indicates that more than half of American teens online are content creators, 19% of online teens keep a blog and 38% read them, older girls lead the blogging activity among teens and teen bloggers are tech savvy and heavy internet users (www.pewinternet.org).