

The Connecticut Digital Library — free, fast, and open 24/7

The scarcity of periodicals in many schools can result in a reluctance to give students appropriately challenging assignments that rely on this type of information (e.g., current events, taking a stand on an issue, presenting opposing viewpoints).

more than 120,000 biographies, a statewide library catalog, and other resources.

More teachers relying on digital library

Glastonbury High School media specialists Karen Fecko



"I love the iCONN service," says Newington High School media specialist Joan Joseph, who calls iCONN "an indispensable teaching tool" for teaching 21st-century literacy skills.



Glastonbury High School media specialists Karen Fecko (left) and Mary Metheny say that once teachers see the wealth of information available in iCONN, they are more likely to require their students to use its reliable sources over the free Web.

Also, with a great disparity in the information and technology resources available to students and teachers in Connecticut public schools, there often can be limited research capabilities in the resources available in the school library media center and the public library.

and Mary Metheny say that during the past two years, they have seen an increase in the number of teachers at their school who rely on the digital library service.

"Once teachers see the wealth of information available in iCONN, they are more likely to require their students to use its reliable sources over the free Web," says Fecko, who has used iCONN since it was first offered nearly five years ago.

Fecko and Metheny also provide in-service training sessions for the school's teachers on the resources available in iCONN. A library media specialist for 17 years, Fecko says iCONN has an enormous database that had previously only been available to teachers and students by subscription.

"From a budgetary standpoint, having access to iCONN makes it possible for us to reduce our subscription costs so we can purchase other resources that had been unaffordable. From an academic standpoint, having easy access to ReQuest and to scholarly journals provides a valuable resource for the sophisticated and in-depth research required by our juniors and seniors," says Metheny.

Sullivan says homes with Internet connections provide additional access points to a consistent, extensive set of resources regardless of geographic location. A public library card is all that teachers and students need for home access.

Connecticut students who learn to use iCONN resources, he says, will find that their newly acquired skills and knowledge will transfer to their higher education experiences. All Connecticut institutions of higher education also offer core iCONN resources to their students.

Teachers and administrators can access more than 300 professional journals (updated daily) to inform and provide viewpoints on issues from different disciplines: arts and humanities, child and adolescent psychology and development, drug and alcohol abuse; health/nutrition/fitness, learning disabilities, literature, school law, science and technology, social sciences and sports/athletic training.

Indispensable teaching tool

Newington High School media specialist Joan Joseph calls iCONN "an indispensable teaching tool" for teaching 21st-

century literacy skills. "With its wide variety of databases, iCONN is a safe, reliable information source that provides thousands of dollars of subscription databases that we could not otherwise provide students with our ever-shrinking budget."

Joseph, a 29-year teaching veteran, says the iCONN staff constantly improves and updates services based on information received from teachers. "They have used our feedback to create one of the best electronic products possible for teachers and students."

iCONN features federated searching, which Joseph says allows students to enter a search once to get hits in all of the iCONN databases. She adds that when students use iCONN as a general resource for research assignments, the federated searching makes access to magazines, journals, periodicals, e-books, history resources, and general reference resources even easier.

"I love the iCONN service," adds Joseph. "It really does provide unparalleled online service to the entire state of Connecticut."

Sullivan says because the K-12 iCONN resources are organized by grade level, teachers and students can easily locate resources targeted to the appropriate learning level. "iCONN fully supports teachers in their efforts to identify information resources that will enable students with learning difficulties and those who need greater academic challenges to fully participate in any given assignment," he says.

Fecko concurs, saying that the variety of sources available through iCONN is "far greater than anything we could ever hope to offer our students and staff" with the school's budget. "iCONN is an essential resource for all students and teachers who want good, reliable information for their academic as well as their personal needs. It should be bookmarked on every Connecticut resident's computer."



For sample learning activities that illustrate iCONN resources, go to <http://www.iconn.org/staff/iConnLearningActivities.aspx>.

For a detailed description of resources, visit <http://www.iconn.org/WhatYouCanSearch.aspx>.

To take a test drive, go to www.iconn.org.

The digital library, which is funded by the state, offers access to more than 25 million articles, more than 4,000 full-text titles, six newspapers (including *The Hartford Courant* and *The New York Times*), 750,000 Associated Press photos, integrated collections on U.S. and world history,