Title of Session: ISTE-SIGTC Handhelds
Moderator: Camilla Gagliolo
Title of File: 20050523handhelds
Date: May 23, 2005

Room: After School Online

BJB2: We usually start events in Tapped In with brief introductions so Camilla can get a sense of her audience. Please tell us where you are located and what you teach.

SukiL: hello all - Camilla - it's 2 am and I am here

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

CamillaGa: Welcome to our discussion on the use of handheld computers in education!

CamillaGa: It would be great if we could do a round of introductions

BJB2: welcome, Suki...we appreciate your dedication!

SukiL: I am a teacher educator ICT in education in Israel

KarenConna: Wow! Suki

CamillaGa: Hello Suki, it is great to have you here all the way from Israel

SukiL: dedication - or craziness

SusanR is impressed with Suki for attending

LoriBu: I'm an instructional tech specialist in Hilton, NY

JimMe: I am an 8th grade language arts teacher in Strathmore Ca.

BrookeM: I am an Elementary School teacher in Maryland

LoriBu: formerly an elementary classroom teacher

EmilyW: I am Emily, I am in TX, a web designer, recent college grad interested in instructional technology

CamillaGa: Hi Jim and Brooke

SukiL: hi Camilla

KarenConna: I am Educational Technology Specialist for an Intermediate Unit in PA - I coordinate all the Tech for the Non Pub Division

BJB2 hands the virtual floor over to our guest speaker, Camilla.

CamillaGa: I am an instructional technologist in Arlington, VA

SusanR: K to 8 Occasional Teacher, former grade one/two classroom teacher and Tech Integrator from Canada

CamillaGa: Thanks BJB for all your help

BillCon: Network Admin Lebanon PA

CamillaGa: Hello Bill

CamillaGa: Handheld computers are often thought of as organizers and schedule keepers, but have many more uses for our instructional programs. Handheld computers offer exciting new opportunities for educators and their students. Due to their low cost, versatility, and portability, handhelds are accessible to more classrooms than traditional computers.

KarenConna: are there advantages over Palm vs Pocket PCs?

CamillaGa: We have found some very interesting uses for handheld computers in both elementary and beyond

SukiL: yes - one kind of handheld already is in the hands of most children - so why not use their capabilities - cell phones

JimMe: What models as a minimum would be recommended

KarenConna: Suki - do students in Israel have Smart Phones with Internet capability?

CamillaGa: Our speaker at NECC has done research on the use of cell phones and testing

SukiL: yes - many do

KarenConna: What has she discovered Camilla?

CamillaGa: Minimum model would be a Tungsten E

SukiL: ???

BillCon: To take full advantage, a model should be able to play media. i.e. media play, quicktime

CamillaGa: He had done research into the possibilities of students taking tests with the tool they all have, their cell phone

CamillaGa: I am waiting to hear what he is saying

KarenConna: interesting...haven't thought about test-taking on cell phones

CamillaGa: Yes handheld, David,

CamillaGa: WELCOME

LoriBu: Camilla can you explain some examples of how you are using handhelds in the classroom?

CamillaGa: We have used handheld to facilitate access to technology to facilitate writing

SusanR . o O (notices that cell phones are integrated with handhelds now)

KarenConna: I would imagine the beaming capability encourages students' collaboration on projects also

CamillaGa: brainstorming, writing, editing and peer review all the way down to 1st Grade

LoriBu: are you using keyboards or graffiti?

CamillaGa: Absolutely beam your writing, get input and walk over and share the screen

CamillaGa: keyboards, has made a world of difference with younger kids

KarenConna: Brooke, this would be a great tool for your classroom and your interests

CamillaGa: keyboard is the perfect size

BrookeM thinks the assessment piece of beaming information from students to teachers is wonderful

LoriBu: what kind of keyboards are you using?

CamillaGa: as well as beaming between students for peer review

BillCon: Yes Susan with the release of windows mobile 2005 just recently, smartphones are running on ms mobile 2005 which brings a great integration between the 2.

BrookeM: I have a handheld but it is for the teacher and for reading assessments

CamillaGa: Are you using MClass?

BrookeM: yep

KarenConna: Brooke do you do Dibels on the handheld?

BrookeM: yes that too

CamillaGa: we use MClass Reading and PALS

LoriBu: what is PALS?

KarenConna: Camilla - how do you like the Reading and the PALS?

CamillaGa: PALS is like DIBELS out of U VA

CamillaGa: We very much like the reading records with MClass

KarenConna: I didn't know that - I looked at that when they sent me a demo Dibels handheld, but didn't have any info on it

CamillaGa: expensive

KarenConna: worth the cost?

CamillaGa: my teachers think so

BrookeM: My school system spent a fortune on it

DavidWe . o O (one of the problems with technology)

BrookeM: we are just getting all the stuff for it but like anything it takes time

CamillaGa: Indeed

LoriBu: Camilla, how many handhelds are you using in the school?

CamillaGa: now, one of the benefits of handheld is the lower cost of hardware to promote ongoing access to technology tools

BillCon: Vendors are catching on quick to provide these tools at a high cost

CamillaGa: I am moving in 10 per class slowly

KarenConna: all grade levels?

LoriBu: for every classroom? how many classrooms do you have?

CamillaGa: K-5 right now, and moving up

ChristineL: sorry, I am late for discussion.....are you all using handhelds INSTEAD of computers or in addition to?

SusanR: Brooke, what type of handhelds?

CamillaGa: that is my goal

BrookeM: Tungsten

KarenConna: what has been the biggest problem management wise?

BrookeM: I just have my own

CamillaGa: We have Tungsten E and E2 and keyboard, Inspiration and GoKnow suite

SukiL: have any of you used virtual keyboards???

LoriBu: we have a big problem with synching under student accounts since you have to have admin rights for the Palm OS software

KarenConna: virtual keyboards? Haven't heard of that

LoriBu: I'm curious how others get around this

CamillaGa: When you look at technology, you need to find a way it will serve a particular need or do something differently

BillCon: Is anyone using content management delivery system with their handhelds?

CamillaGa: we decided to attach writing as our first need

ChristineL: I agree Camilla....which is why I wonder whether folks are using handhelds INSTEAD or along with computers.

CamillaGa: on PCs, you have more troubles with syncing

KarenConna: is there anything out there related to literacy and reading improvement for using handhelds?

BrookeM: Content management?"

KarenConna: Brooke - Plato or Renaissance Learning type of software

CamillaGa: We do our publishing in a lab

LoriBu: are you using all macs to synch with, Camilla?

CamillaGa: I do not know, Karen

CamillaGa: yes

CamillaGa: seamless on a Mac with OSX

BillCon: You can deliver content right to the handheld and manage what students are doing on the handheld in a class

KarenConna . o O (perhaps pocket pcs would sync better for districts that are all Windows based)

CamillaGa: yes, a range of tools

SukiL: will there be any hands on workshop with handhelds at NECC??

LoriBu: still have admin rights problems with Pocket PC, I think and students don't have admin rights

CamillaGa: Suki, virtual keyboards? you mean wireless

ChristineL: Could someone mention what students are using handhelds for, curricularly speaking?

CamillaGa: profiles on a PC is a known problem

KarenConna: Christine - a lot of students use the science probes

KarenConna: and do data collection and analysis related to that

ChristineL: that's helpful...thanks

CamillaGa: Hands-on scientific inquiry and data collection in the field

SukiL: no - I mean virtual - http://www.virtualdevices.net/

ChristineL: do those kids not have computers in the science lab?

AmyMa: yes, there are several hands on workshops at NECC. Many are half or full days. Check the events. There seem to be several nice ones.

SukiL: I have not tried one yet

KarenConna: they take the handhelds in the field Christine

CamillaGa: Mathematical functions are nice on the handheld

ChristineL: gotcha

KarenConna: something that's difficult to do with desktops and probably not something you want to do with laptops

BrookeM: oh cool Suki

KarenConna . o O (laptops near the pond---ugh!)

CamillaGa: we find that we use laptops differently than handhelds

CamillaGa: as one of our students said, you do not have to login

KarenConna: cool Suki -- have you tried the virtual keyboard yourself?

ChristineL: do you issue students handhelds to use all year, or are they distributed by particular teachers and only if the situation requires it (like going to a pond)

CamillaGa: it is the closest we can get to ongoing one-to-one access to technology tools

AmyMa: several different vendors now make probeware that can attach to a handheld or computer. You can do some really great data collection in the field, as well as schedule collections without having to carry a laptop or tie up a desktop. The data can then be uploaded to a pc for more manipulation.

CamillaGa: we have a set per class

KarenConna: Camilla - do the students access the Internet via the handhelds?

KarenConna . o O (wondering about the screen size and surfing)

CamillaGa: no, we do not yet have that ability

CamillaGa: I think we are looking at that for the older kids

LoriBu: and you have 10 per classroom set?

CamillaGa: yes

CamillaGa: 10 per classroom that have handhelds

CamillaGa: we have 25 sets to go around the older kids

LoriBu: and 1 keyboard for every handheld?

KarenConna . o O (they make inspiration for the palm)

AmyMa: you can get wifi connected hh or add it on. Most people like it for downloading info directly, syncing over a network, email and updating content. You can surf though too.

CamillaGa: we found it was much more successful with a smaller set but more frequent access

BrookeM: and kidspiration too KC

KarenConna: Amy - have you surfed?

CamillaGa: teacher can plan their time

AmyMa: yes, but many websites are not yet hh friendly

ChristineL: I've seen Inspiration for the palm, but I'm not sure it's useful because the size limitations....have you all found it so?

SukiL: in Israel almost every child has a cell phone ..... and it is going to be truly amazing IF teachers learn to take advantage of the possibilities

KarenConna: Amy - how was it? Did you think it was feasible for those sites suited for it?

SukiL: ....but most schools still haven't understood

CamillaGa: My kids and teachers like Inspiration for PALM

SukiL: I still love big screens

AmyMa: I think the more you work with the screen the more comfortable you get. The kids have no problems as the screen is bigger than GameBoy. You can also work with font size, zoom features, etc.

KarenConna: Suki - may schools in the US have cell phone policies that don't allow them to use during class

BrookeM: have you used any drawing software? to illustrate their work?

CamillaGa: It is said to be for grades 4 and up, but the kids have taken to it and have incorporated it into the writing process

ChristineL: good point, Amy

BillCon: Camilla is the goal to get handhelds to all students (long term)

SusanR: Can they be readily moved as a set from classroom to classroom?

CamillaGa: We are looking at the results of our pilot right now

CamillaGa: yes, you can move it from class to class

ChristineL: have you had any misuse or abuse of handhelds by students?

AmyMa: There are many kinds of ways to store and manage. Most people either purchase or make a cart or a suitcase.

CamillaGa: there are some simple cards to redo your PALMs quickly

CamillaGa: I like the suitcase

SusanR . o O (recalls a similar project with Apple eMates)

CamillaGa: Big screens are good

AmyMa: The Grant Street software is wonderful for set up and management

CamillaGa: Oh yes, before its time, eMates

CamillaGa: yes, the SD Cards for removing, installing and recloning PALMS

SusanR: and the Apple Newton

CamillaGa: Are you using the beam system for Grand Street?

AmyMa: I had one of those. Apple is always ahead of its time

ChristineL: amen

SusanR: Still have a Newton and eMate

CamillaGa: really!

AmyMa: No, the Grant Street lets you ghost the image via the SD slot to other hh quickly.   They also have an Express card for quickly adding files or apps

CamillaGa: Yes, works quickly

CamillaGa: Amy, what do you use the PALMs for?

CamillaGa: instructionally?

LoriBu: funding is the biggest obstacle I face for handhelds and the software you've been mentioning

AmyMa: in my opinion they are must haves for a classroom environment

CamillaGa: funding is always the obstacle

CamillaGa: Tell us about must have ....

ChristineL: Amy, can you explain? I am at an all Mac school and we use technology extensively...I'm trying hard to resist the temptation to buy something for technology's sake and am looking for really solid reasons why handhelds are important in the classroom

ChristineL: or in the field

SukiL: Camilla and all - I have been chatting on the side with Emily .... but need to go to sleep now - in order to go teach in thee hours --- have a good session - hope to see some of you at NECC - bye

AmyMa: I actually train teachers using handhelds. I sometimes train students too. We use as a tech tool wherever there is a natural fit...graphic organizers, writing, ebooks, assessment, data collection,....

KarenConna: Christine - in the field with the probes, handhelds allow the students to act as scientists -- to engage in authentic practice.

CamillaGa: We have been able to have a more flexible access to technology

KarenConna waves bye to Suki

CamillaGa: Thanks, Suki for joining us

CamillaGa: See you at NECC

SukiL: bye - thank you

ChristineL: thanks Karen.....if students already have access to digital cameras, vid cams, handhelds are still important for data collection? notes, etc?

BillCon: Examples of content management product for Pocket PC in a classroom. http://www.ets.org/discourse/testimonials.html

SukiL left the room (signed off).

LoriBu: Camilla, so in the classroom you set them up for writing almost like having a bank of laptops or desktops available to students? like a mini computer lab?

KarenConna: Christine with the addition of the probe especially

CamillaGa: yes, that is correct

CamillaGa: we also use some of the math programs (freeware) to do morning math

LoriBu: any particular way you suggest for students keeping their own writng and/or data separate after syncing?

ChristineL: my math teacher would be interested.....can you give more detail?

AmyMa: I do think hh are a great tool. Much cheaper than laptops, which you really do not need for word processing, planning, drafting, etc. As far as must haves..I meant the Grant Street SD products once you are using hh in the classroom. They save a lot of time in set up/management

LoriBu: not sure how your students store information on your network, or if they do

CamillaGa: We use Lucy Caulkin's Writer's Workshop were students keep several pieces going and do a lot of editing, drafting and brainstorming for new ideas, It is all available to them right there

CamillaGa: Got it, Amy

CamillaGa: I agree

SusanR: can they save to their workspace on the network?

LoriBu: if multiple students are using the same handheld, is it just in the naming of pieces that they keep them separate?

AmyMa: if students share hh, you can have them each have their own memory card. Also once they sync they can pull their work to their own network file. Most handhelds allow you to file the work in a category/folder for quick sorting too.

CamillaGa: handheld can do multimedia and books, but will develop over time to become more capable to handle multimedia

EmilyW left the room.

CamillaGa: it gets saved under the name of the handheld and can be stored on the network from there. As with other electronic files, saving correctly is important

AmyMa: Speaking of ebooks..We love Plucker. It is an ebook/web clipping app. It is free. make sure you check it out. You can beam web pages too.

KarenConna: I think that it's important for students to have access to technology to work with -- while laptops are great if we can offer them in the classroom, handhelds are a nice alternative. Imagine if you had to give up your laptop or computer at work!

BillCon: To be able to save work in their network space from a palm they would have to sync to a computer logged in on their network account then move file from palm profile to network space

KarenConna: Kids go without access often -- handhelds offer one way to get tech into their hands in greater numbers

CamillaGa: Thanks for the tip on Plucker. I did not know this software.

ChristineL: are any of your teachers or administrators using their palms in ways other than datebook and address book?

BridgetM left the room.

AmyMa: whoops...

ChristineL: I ask because that's the extent of use at my school

CamillaGa: We do not sync every day as Karen hinted. We have ongoing access, but do not move all work to the network folders daily

LoriBu: I use Pluck as my RSS aggregator. Wonder if they're related?

SusanR . o O (wonders if teachers are using handhelds for assessment)

CamillaGa: aha, I like that

AmyMa: there are many electronic gradebooks as well as other assessment programs. DIBELS, Running records, Learner Profile to Go...

CamillaGa: yes, we do reading assessment and state mandated tests as well as keep spreadsheets for ongoing observation and notation

SusanR . o O (checks out the Plucker web site)

ChristineL: very good

ChristineL: thanks

KarenConna: I was very impressed with the Dibels test on the handheld

CamillaGa: gradebooks have PALM components to export/import between hh and computer

CamillaGa: yes, it simplifies testing

ChristineL: thanks all for your expert help....much appreciated as i evaluate whether to move in that direction.

LoriBu: an admin in one of my buildings uses SnapData to do quick walk through assessments in classrooms

AmyMa: T-Observe is great too

CamillaGa: There are also teacher observation tools

CamillaGa: GoObserve is one

ChristineL: what does it do?

CamillaGa: Allows Principals to go in and observe teachers and make notations on their teaching

ChristineL: ahhhh.....for evaluating teachers....got it

SusanR: Media-x produces assessment software for handhelds; they will be at NECC

SusanR: http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2005/exhibit_hall/exhibits/exhibitor_detail.php?Key=142158&section=

SusanR: a local company

LoriBu: Media X tools are very powerful but a bit of a learning curve to learn to use

LoriBu: especially if you are new to handhelds in general

CamillaGa: There is software that allows you to draw student data to carry on your hh like student schedules, attendance and so forth

SusanR: used more at the high school level I believe

LoriBu: our security staff in our High School uses ScheduleFinder for just that, Camilla

ChristineL: I am new to handhelds for most of the purposes you are all discussing....I use mine for datebook mostly and notes

CamillaGa: a world of opportunities ahead of you now....

ChristineL: but I am very curious about how you are all using them

ChristineL: I am heading home now (have been very naughty and have been talking to you all while in a faculty meeting about homework)! Goodnight and thanks for all the help!

LoriBu waves to Christine

CamillaGa: Dear participants, I am going to have to leave shortly as my family is calling me. It was great chatting with you. Thanks to all for participating and have a great evening!

KarenConna waves bye to Christine

KarenConna: Just a reminder....

BrookeM left the room.

LoriBu: thanks, Camilla

KarenConna: if you haven't joined the SIGTC group room, please consider doing so..

CamillaGa: Thanks to all!

KarenConna: you can create discussion threads to continue our discussion

BillCon: Thanks Camilla

KarenConna: and receive notices of our events etc.

KarenConna: Thanks to Camilla for a great session!

KarenConna: I must also head out to another meeting on Tapped In

CamillaGa: See you at the next online event

LoriBu waves good-bye to all

KarenConna waves by to Camilla

CamillaGa: I am waving manually

AmyMa: Thanks. I am new .. this was great.

KarenConna Waves bye to all

KarenConna: Please come again Amy