Title:
Youth Connect Communities With New Technology

Word Count:
383

Summary:
From blogging to podcasting to creating online videos, 4-H youth are leading the way, using new media and communication tools to share breaking news, even coverage and educational information with their community.

Keywords:
Youth Connect Communities With New Technology

Article Body:
From blogging to podcasting to creating online videos, 4-H youth are leading the way, using new media and communication tools to share breaking news, event coverage and educational information with their community.

For example, the 4-H News technology club in Jefferson County, Wash., provides on-the-spot reports through video clips and podcasts posted to their 4-H Network News Web site. Club members have covered a fire in an historic hotel and a Red Cross disaster training exercise and conducted interviews with local business leaders.

The youth are hands-on in every step of putting together the one-to-two-minute news segments. "We get ideas about what we'll do and who we'll interview, then we take the camera, tape footage, put it on the computers and edit it," 15-year-old Sophie Gilbert said.

Gilbert first created a video about a school reunion but quickly saw the educational value for her community. She has produced segments about avoiding drugs and alcohol and a beach restoration project. "There is a need for us to talk about some of the important things going on in our county and in the world," she said.

The club came together as a collaboration among the local 4-H club, the Washington State University Extension office and the local newspaper. Jack Olmsted, 4-H leader for the club, Pamela Roberts, 4-H coordinator for the Jefferson County 4-H office, and the newspaper's publisher work closely with the youth.

"Online media can be a priceless resource to capture not only the value of the 4-H experience, but also for our community, country and the world," said Olmsted. "The youth are getting the process down and planning segments while making them enjoyable but also informative."

The 4-H reporters publish their stories to an international audience using tools that are readily available in homes and offices-a video camera, computer linked to the Internet and telephone. "It is important to show the world that this can be done and it's easy for anyone to do," said 13-year-old Daniel Bryant.

Club members see themselves as a resource to others who want to start using online media. They also improve their public speaking skills and build self-esteem as they teach adults how to create and post news segments.

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.