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Livescribe Pulse Pen to Ship in March

A couple of months ago I reported on the development of the Livescribe pen and its unique features. The LiveScribe Pulse pen is a digital pen with the capability to record audio which is synchronized to the text that has been written on specially printed notebooks with microdots.

The pen uses Anoto functionality, which is the foundation for the Fly Pentop which was developed by LeapFrog, Inc. The Livescribe Pulse, looks to be about the size of a Mont Blanc pen and it has an OLED display as well as a microphone and built-in speakers. I just learned that the LiveScribe Pulse Smartpen will begin shipping in March 2008 and there will be two different versions, a 1 Gigabyte version (\$149 dollars) that can store up to 100 hours of audio and a 2 Gigabyte version (\$199 dollar) that can store 200 hours of audio. This has the potential to be a great tool for students who have difficulty with note taking. The Pulse pen will include a Getting Started Guide, a Notebook, Docking unit, and Ear buds with built-in microphones. As part of the system students will be able to share their smart notebooks over the web as well as be able to search their notebooks for specific information. I for one am very excited with the platform they are building and the potential for this tool. You can watch



CEO Jim Margraff talk about the Livescribe Pulse pen during an interview with a CNET reporter at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJNWIOhSyhA>. I am hopeful that I can receive a Livescribe Pulse smartpen to review for the blog and for my newsletter Inclusion Times. With all of its capabilities it could be a real god send for those that struggle to simultaneously take notes and listen to the content. Since the Livescribe Pulse pen synchronizes the audio and the text the student can always go back and review the notes. If this works as described, this is really going to be a

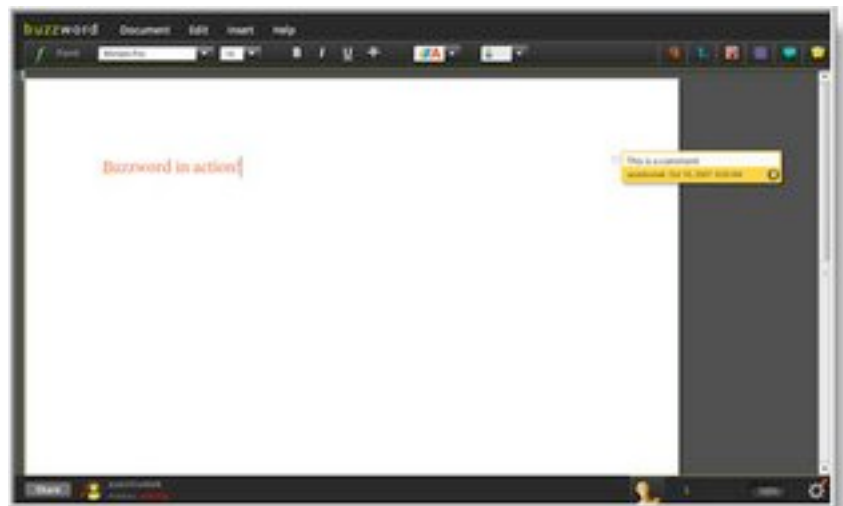
significant tool

for students who struggle with note taking. For more information you can go to: www.livescribe.com

A New Web 2.0 Word Processor from Adobe

I had a chance to take a look at the new Web 2.0 word processor

called Buzzword from Adobe, which is in beta right now. Buzzword is Flash based and feels very much like a full featured application that you would have installed on your computer. It supports headers, footers, lists as well as adding comments. You can also add images and tables to your document. Even though it is in beta it has a nice feel to it. One of the features which is impressive is the ability to share the document for collaborative work. This is a great feature! You should be aware that documents are stored on their server- so you may be hesitant to store anything of a confidential nature. Buzzword is very responsive and has a great look



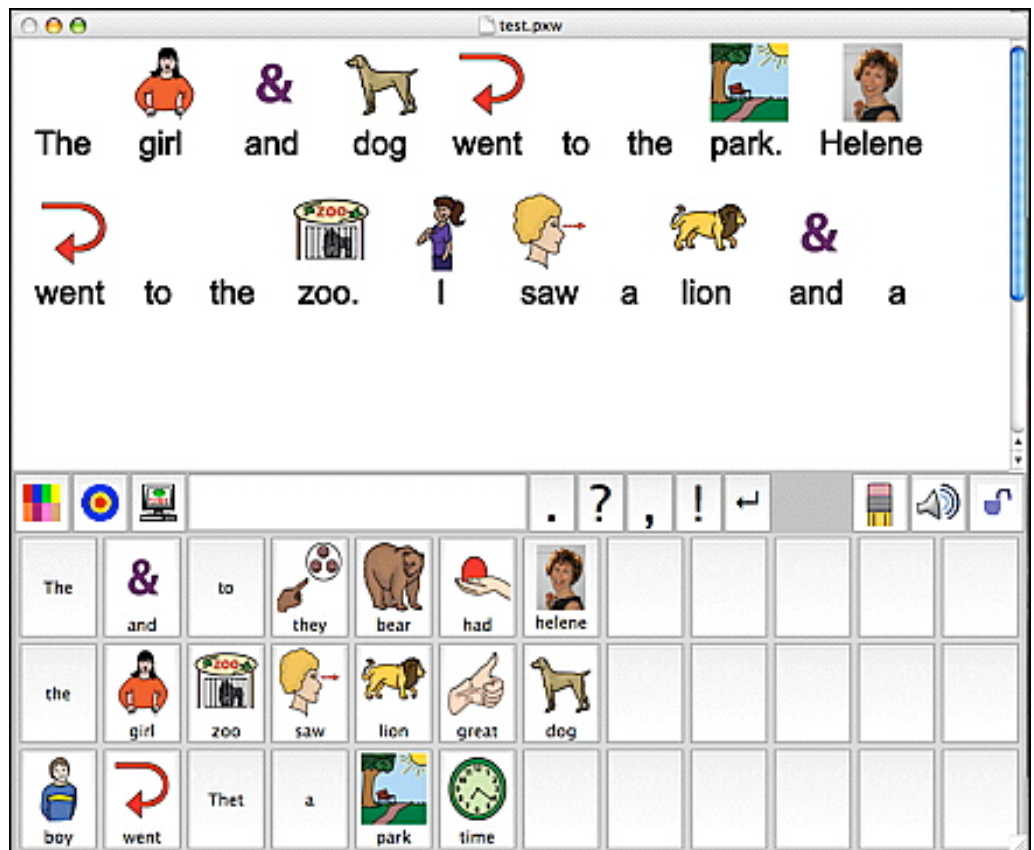
and feel to it. Buzzword is an Adobe product with lots of promise. I have put together a short video for you to take a look at it. Here is the link to preview the video: <http://tinyurl.com/2ur25p> Enjoy!

Slater Software Releases PixWriter 3.0!

I have always been a big fan of Slater Software and have throughout the years recommended that schools use Picture It! and PixWriter with their students to support literacy. PixWriter is a very easy to use picture supported writing tool that is not only easy to use but easy for teachers to set up. With the release of PixWriter 3.0, Slater Software has made some notable upgrades that continues to make this product really shine. First and foremost users will immediately be impressed with the newly drawn library of Literacy Support Pictures (LSP) in high resolution.

The library of Literacy Support Pictures contains over 9,000 LSP in color and black-and-white. The new Literacy Support Pictures have a clean and modern look that is very pleasing to the eye. For

to use. If you have never used PixWriter, you simply type your story and the words and pictures are automatically inserted into the buttons on the bottom of the screen. After you have included all of your words you simply press



those students that need to use a switch, PixWriter 3.0 now supports single and two step scanning with the option to have the program read the buttons. If you have never used PixWriter you are really in for a treat! You will find PixWriter 3.0 very easy

the Escape key which clears the word processing area, and is now ready for the student to access. Now your students can use the picture supports to write their story. If you would like, you can also target words and use your digital pictures to provide the

picture support. One of the new options in the latest version is being able to use the Phrase Edit Box, which allows you to fill one button with two or three words



that are represented by one Literacy Support Picture. For example if you would like to use the phrase “cowboy boots” you simply type the phrase into the Phrase Edit Box and then click on



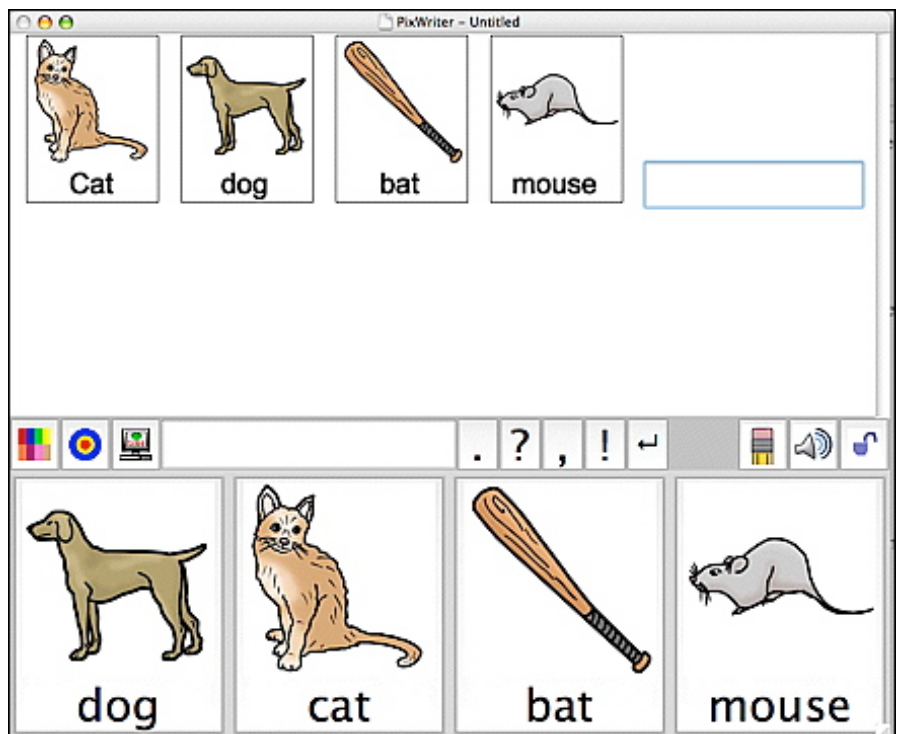
the Get Picture icon. In a second a picture of cowboy boots will be shown in the button with the associated picture. After adding words to the buttons you have complete control as to where you would like the words to be placed. Simply, hold the Shift key down and drag the picture to another button-in a split second the picture you drag will be swapped with the other picture. You can also color

the button border by holding down the Option key and clicking on a color in the Color palette in the tool bar. There are a number of color coding schemes that may be

helpful for your students as they are learning to write. For example you may choose to color the borders with green for verbs, for example. One area which has improved significantly in PixWriter 3.0 is in the ability to edit the document.

Editing a document is considerably easier in PixWriter 3.0 than in previous releases and

there are more advanced editing features, should you need to access them. One of the really handy features for teachers is the ability to create the writing supports from text copied to the clipboard. The process is really easy and within seconds your supported writing environment will be set up. It is also now easier to create PixCards which can be used for flash cards or PECS. All told, PixWriter maintains its ease of use and builds on its strengths to make this one of the handiest picture writing supports with text to speech in the classroom. I'm



sure that you will find great ways and can think of many students with a wide range of skills and abilities that can benefit from PixWriter 3.0! For more information go to www.slatersoftware.com.

LabQuest from Vernier

I have written great deal about the use of probeware in the classroom and how it can change the way science is taught in schools. At NECC 2007, Vernier Software & Technology was demonstrating their latest product called LabQuest. LabQuest is a handheld data capture tool with real time graphing and analysis that is done with the device's high resolution touch screen. Vernier Software & Technology was kind enough to send me a LabQuest to review. As soon as you open the box and unpack the LabQuest you are immediately impressed with the size and the look and feel of the device. The LabQuest fits nicely into the palm of your hand and has been ruggedized with a aqua

green rubber overmolding which makes it easier to hold and ensures that the device can withstand bumps, falls, and splashes. Once



you place the

LabQuest in your hand you can intuitively feel the quality and workmanship that went into this device. The LabQuest's high resolution screen is sharp and very readable even in bright day light. So taking it into the field will not be problem. The LabQuest can be controlled via the Navigation keys or by using the supplied stylus on the touch screen. I found the LabQuest's interface very intuitive and easy to use. The icons on the screen are clear and accessible. The LabQuest runs off a high quality lithium-ion rechargeable battery which will power the device for the entire school day. Its light weight and portability

make it the ideal tool for field work. For students who want to record their observations the LabQuest can capture notes using the on-screen keyboard directly in the Notes area of the file.

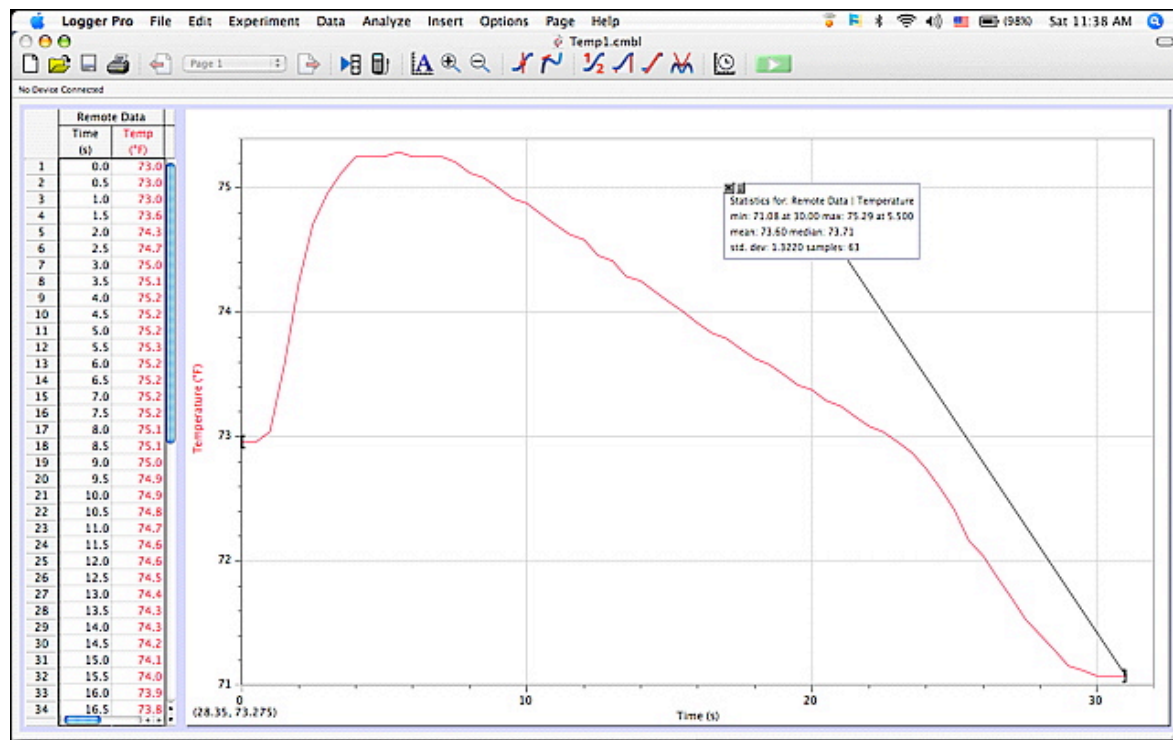
Using the LabQuest could not be any easier-just plug in your sensor and click on the Collect button on the LabQuest. You will immediately begin to see your data graphed right on the screen in real time. It is really plug and play with the LabQuest- there is nothing to configure or adjust. This is huge, considering that students will be able to concentrate on the task at hand and not to worry about the device recognizing the sensor that is plugged in. The LabQuest does all of the heavy lifting for you so that you can concentrate on your experiment. In today's day and age it is extremely important for students to be able to visualize data and in fact this is what the LabQuest does extremely well. Students can plug in any on of the

50 sensors to collect data. With LabQuest from Vernier Software & Technology, students can plug in Vernier sensors to acquire real-time graphing and analysis via the device's color screen for subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology and Earth science. Users can operate the LabQuest using the built-

in LabQuest Graphing and Analysis Application or connect it to either a PC or Mac in order to export collected data to Vernier's Logger Pro software. The handheld can also be connected to a printer, headphones, speakers or other devices. LabQuest Brings Versatile Data Analysis to Science Studies.

Using the LabQuest could not be made any easier. I simply connected the Temperature sensor to the LabQuest and pressed the

which was installed on my MacBook. All I did was connect the LabQuest to the USB port on my computer and within seconds



Run button to begin my data collection. Once I was done I was able to use the tools built into the LabQuest to analyze my data. I was able to look at specific points in time in addition I could record my observations with the built in Notes area using an on-screen keyboard and the provided stylus. Once I collected the data I decided to see how easy it was to download the data to LoggerPro

Logger detected the LabQuest and I was able to download all of the data to my computer. It was really that easy without any hitches or hiccups. You can see the graph and table of the data that I collected in the screenshot. If you are looking for a way to make science come alive in your classroom this could be the perfect product for you to take a look at. For more

information about LabQuest go to www.vernier.com

New Versions of Keystrokes, Switch XS, and Layout Kitchen

KeyStrokes 4 (<http://www.assistiveware.com/keystrokes.php>) adds

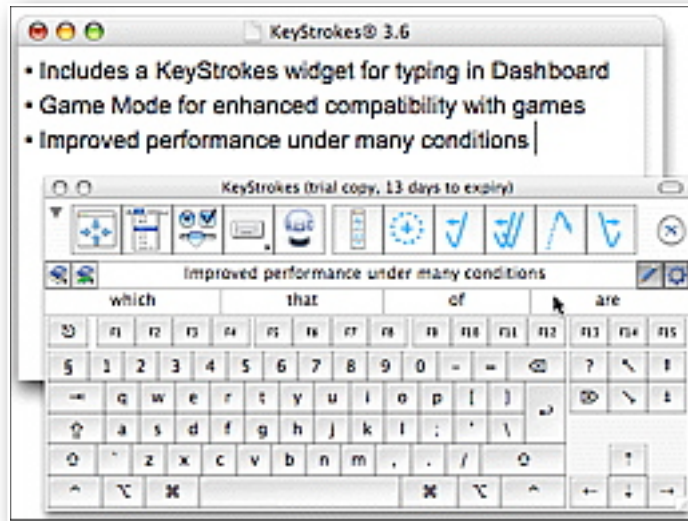
LayoutKitchen, which allows users to design their own virtual keyboards. Such virtual keyboards can be used not only for typing, but also to launch applications, speak, run AppleScripts and much more. This makes KeyStrokes more than ever the hub that gives users who cannot use a physical keyboard or who prefer a graphic tablet or touch screen full access to their computer. KeyStrokes 4 also adds Spanish and Russian word prediction dictionaries.

KeyStrokes 4.0 runs on Mac OS X 10.3 and later (including Leopard). Registered KeyStrokes 3 users can use the new version, but to use LayoutKitchen and design their own keyboards an upgrade to a KeyStrokes 4 activation code is

required. An upgrade from KeyStrokes 3 to KeyStrokes 4

requires Mac OS X 10.4 or later and is a free update for all

registered SwitchXS users.



(including LayoutKitchen) costs 99 euro excluding VAT (129 USD in North America). This upgrade is free for anyone who purchased KeyStrokes 3 in 2007 or 2008. For more info they should contact support@assistiveware.com.

SwitchXS 2.5 (<http://www.assistiveware.com/switchxs.php>) adds full Leopard support, as well as many internal enhancements, and also includes the new LayoutKitchen 2. With SwitchXS 2.5, a user who cannot use a physical keyboard or mouse has full access to Mac OS X with just a single switch. SwitchXS 2.5

LayoutKitchen 2 (<http://www.assistiveware.com/layoutkitchen.php>) makes designing on-screen keyboards for KeyStrokes and scan panels for SwitchXS much easier and faster with a new drag and drop button browser, SmartSnap and many other productivity enhancing features. The image browser is now searchable and includes over 600 images. LayoutKitchen 2.0 runs on Mac OS X 10.3 and later (including Leopard) and is a free update for all registered SwitchXS and LayoutKitchen users.

KeyStrokes 4.0 and LayoutKitchen 2.0 are the last versions supporting Mac OS X 10.3. Universal binary versions requiring at least Mac OS X 10.4 are currently in beta and will be released as free updates shortly.

SpaceNavigator-A Whole New Way to Fly

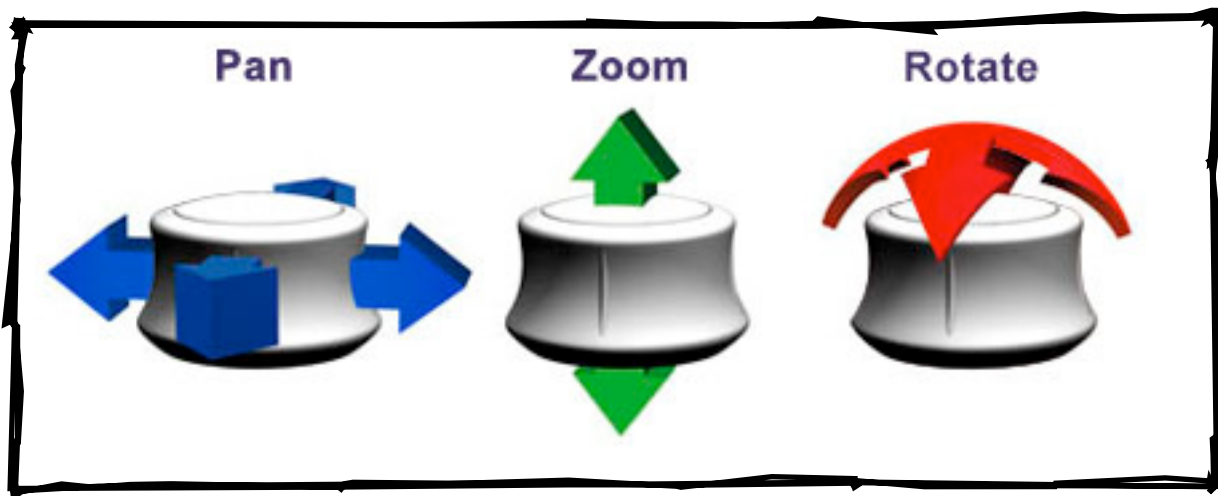
As I was walking through the Exhibit Hall at the DigitalLife 2007 Conference, an image of Google Earth on the computer caught my eye. While we have all

more closely I saw that the exhibitor was controlling Google



Earth with a new type of controller. Of course my curiosity got the better of me and I had to look more closely at the device that was controlling the sweeping and fluid movements within Google Earth. The controller is

intended to stay stationary on the desk. Holding onto the SpaceNavigator's collar you can push, zoom, pan and rotate, simultaneously to navigate. The feedback is incredible and you honestly feel as if the SpaceNavigator is an extension of yourself as you glide through Google Earth. SpaceNavigator includes the Configuration Wizard that guides you through using the navigation cap and how to set preferences for the application you will be using it with. SpaceNavigator software



played around with Google Earth on the computer there was something about this image that I saw on the screen that made me stop and look. When I looked

called the SpaceNavigator and is available from 3DConnexion, a Logitech Company. SpaceNavigator is a puck like device with a cap, which is

that lets you configure the application that you will be using it. Using the Configuration Wizard you will be up and running with the SpaceNavigator

within minutes. The SpaceNavigator supports over 100 different applications but is ideal if you are using Google Earth 4 or Google SketchUp. You really have to experience using the SpaceNavigator with Google Earth-you feel as if you are flying through the application and the whole experience of using the application changes. Once you use SpaceNavigator from 3DConnexion you will never ever want to use a mouse with Google Earth again. SpaceNavigator from 3DConnexion is available for educators at a cost of \$59 dollars. If you are a serious Google Earth user then this is one accessory that you must have! For more information go to: <http://www.3dconnexion.com/>

Reliable Backup with Jungle Disk

All it takes is one computer hard disk crash to know how important it is to backup your computer on a regular basis. However, we all know that far to few computer

users are backing up their precious computer data until it too late. With more and more backup services being offered on the web I decided to give it a try. I opted to try it for 30 days of free service



and then downloaded, Jungle Disk which you can download for your Windows, Macintosh, or Linux or USB flash drive. What really sold me is that this service is it is fairly inexpensive and you only pay for what you use. But more importantly the online storage is powered by Amazon S3, which made me feel very comfortable trusting my data with them. I have it installed on my Dell laptop and it is automatically configured as a **J drive** which I can now save to, or drag files into the drive from the Windows desktop. What is nice about the service is that I can also install Jungle Disk to my MacBook laptop and use the same

drive without incurring another fee. At the Jungle Disk website you can see a breakdown of the pricing which is really reasonable. I will give it a try and let you know how it goes. For more

information:

<http://jungledisk.com/>

Google Docs Adds Forms

Over the last couple of months I have begun to rely more and more on Google Docs for collaborating and sharing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. As I noted a couple of weeks ago Google continues to develop and add incredible features to this platform. Just yesterday I learned that Google has added the ability to create Forms from within the Spreadsheet application. I tried it last night and found it very easy to use. It is now possible with this



feature to collect data from a group of people and then analyze and collect it within Google Spreadsheet. It is a great way to do a simple survey and share with people in your group. Just go to Google Docs and select New Spreadsheet-then click on Share and Select To fill out Form and then click on Start editing your form. From there follow the steps to create your form. Once you have created the form you can invite others to it. Once your collaborators have submitted their forms, the data automatically is published to your spreadsheet.

Ergonomics.. Products to Support Your Notebook Computing

It will come as no



surprise that laptops are now outpacing the sales of desktops which will have an impact on how students use these tools. One of the considerations we need to reflect on is how students will access the laptops. There are times when the angle of the laptops is not ideal for young students hands. In this regards a number of companies have recently released products to help improve on the ergonomics of the laptop keyboard. Lapworks has recently released a number of products designed to improve the ergonomics and positioning of

laptops. The Futura Laptop Desk is a compact lightweight design that is ideal if you want to work with your laptop on your lap. The Futura's design keeps the

notebook off of your lap and the cutouts help to dissipate heat.

When you want to use your notebook on a desk you can fold back the Futura and set your laptop on it in any one of five different positions. The Futura has five different positions that it can be locked into, to give you just the right angle to make you as comfortable as possible accessing the keyboard. The Futura has a rubberized surface which keeps your notebook from sliding. Students will love the compact design and it can easily be placed in your their backpack to take between home and school.

Lapworks just announced the arrival of two new ergonomic products called the Attache and Envoy Laptop Stands for the PC and Mac laptops. I had a chance to use the Attache with my Dell and MacBook and am very impressed with the quality of the laptop stand. The Attache has a sleek design and features two built in fans for cooling, 4 port USB 2 hubs for connectivity, and a push button operation for 4 elevation settings. In the lowest elevation angle the Attache is ideal for improving the ergonomics when students are typing. The Attache is made of sturdy ABS plastic and looks to be quite durable.

I have to say that using the Attache with my Dell laptop made a real difference in how warm my laptop got. The Attache has an aluminum face plate with along with the fans really kept the laptop running very cool. The aluminum faceplate really dissipates the heat and with the



addition of the whisper quiet fans which are powered by the USB port you really can ensure that your laptop will run a lot cooler. The fans were so quiet that there were times when I thought that they were not even on. However, the fact that my laptops stayed so cool assured me that they were working properly. The Attache also provides you with the luxury of a 4 port USB hub which is great when you are on the road and need to connect your USB devices. I for one was impressed with the quality and the design of the Attache and thought it would be great for me when I do presentations and need to elevate my laptop so that it is eye level. For more information about these products go to: <http://www.laptopdesk.net>

Webshare Feature Added to Yuuguu

A couple of months ago, I shared with you how I have been using Yuuguu to do webinars and to share my computer screen with colleagues. Yuuguu has really come in handy, but one of its downfalls was that the person who you were sharing your screen with had to have the Yuuguu client installed on their computer. Well all of that has changed, and Yuuguu now allows you to share your screen even with colleagues of yours that don't have the Yuuguu client installed- right over the web. The process is very simple, simply point your colleague to www.yuuguu.com/share and provide them with your six digit PIN number and voila they can now see your computer screen. This makes Yuuguu an incredibly valuable Web 2.0 tool for training and providing support. Combining Yuuguu with OoVoo

for videoconferencing make this a great one two knockout punch for training, support and webinars. The Yuuguu client is available for Macintosh and PC computers. Check this application out you will be glad you did!

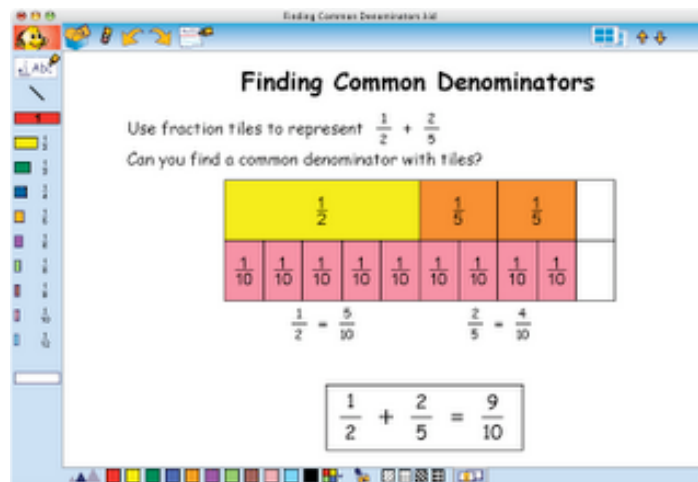
LeapFrog Announces New Reading Product called Tag



LeapFrog announced a new product at Demo 2008 called Tag which is a touch reading system that takes advantage of Anoto Functionality; the same technology used in the Fly Pentop Fusion. Using Anoto Functionality, LeapFrog can print their books with very small microdots on the page that gives

the paper real interactivity. LeapFrog will be shipping this product in June 2008 and can open doors to reading by creating a very engaging and interactive environment. To see the live demonstration from Demo 2008 go to this URL:

<http://tinyurl.com/32wwku>



Kidspiration 3 Released

Today Inspiration, Inc. announced that Kidspiration 3 will be released on February 6th. Kidspiration 3 adds lot of new features which really make this a very substantial upgrade. Kidspiration 3 will now allow students to use the expanded

Symbol Library with over 3000 pictures as well as searching the symbol library for pictures when connected to the web.

Kidspiration 3 now includes the Word Guide which is an online dictionary and thesaurus which is great for language development.

The Word Guide is perfect for students since it

also includes text to speech support along with picture representation when applicable. Kidspiration 3 now includes

an extensive visual math tools which makes it an ideal tool for interactive white boards.

Teachers will have access to color tiles, pattern blocks, base ten blocks, fraction tiles and fraction boxes. Look for review of Kidspiration 3 in the next issue of Inclusion Times. For more information: <http://inspiration.com>