

2000

THE MILLENNIUM NOTEBOOK 12

Internet U—No Ivy, No Walls,
No Keg Parties

HOW CAN there be classes without classrooms? Exams without blue books?

Isn't the steady inhalation of chalk dust essential to a top-drawer education? Joe Martin doesn't think so. The 41-year-old CFO of Farm Bureau Insurance in Indianapolis is enrolled in Duke University's Global Executive M.B.A. program. On his lunch hour, or in his bedroom as his wife sleeps, Martin logs on to the Internet and delves into homework assigned by a professor more than 500 miles away. He listens to lectures delivered via audio stream and engages in real-time Web chats with classmates from China to Brazil. In nine months, he and 40 others from 14 countries will make up the first class to graduate from Duke's virtual business school.

Duke is one of several schools, including Ohio University and Purdue, that have recently launched Internet-based M.B.A. programs for far-flung execs. Other institutions have begun offering electronic graduate programs in fields from computer science to nursing, and would-be liberal-arts majors can collect B.A. degrees from places like the University of Alaska without the need to invest in earmuffs. About 300 colleges and universities now offer virtual degrees, says Pam Dixon, author of the book "Virtual College." And, as we head into the next millennium, she predicts, professors will increasingly trade their ivory towers for spires of silicon. "In 10 years, cybercolleges will definitely be part of mainstream education. There's no escaping it," she says. Richard Staelin, director of the Duke program, is similarly optimistic. "This is a paradigm shift in education," he says. "In five years, I believe, we'll have as many applications for our [online] M.B.A. program as for our regular one."

Trading pomp and circumstance for plug

and circuit board has obvious advantages for Joe Martin, whose employer put up \$75,000 for the 19-month Duke program. "My job, combined with the fact that I wanted to keep a family life, has made it impossible for me to go back to school these last 20 years," he says. "The traditional programs didn't have the flexibility I needed." Lisa Haddock, an online instructor at the University of Phoenix, took the new medium's flexibility to extremes when her second daughter opted to arrive in the midst of two ongoing classes. "I logged on three times during labor," she says.

Virtual colleges, of course, still struggle with the stigma of their forebears, those back-of-the-magazine correspondence courses. Not all online offerings are accredited, and prospective students should be cautious—for the time being, anyway. "By the millennium, I think some of the really bad programs will have run their course," says Dixon. "We'll be out of the honeymoon phase, and more realistic about what really works for students."

We may have to be, especially when faced with the educational demands of the future. Utah Gov. Michael Leavitt has spearheaded the formation of a sort of electronic consortium of some 20 universities in 13 nearby states—dubbed Western Governors University (WGU)—that would allow online students to take classes from any of the institutions or from a combination of all of them. Leavitt conceived the plan as a response to projections that his state's college enrollments would double by 2015. Utah can't afford the \$3 billion it would cost to build the nine new campuses required. Some futurists even go so far as to predict the demise of conventional teachers. Joseph Coates, coauthor of "2025: Scenarios of U.S. and Global Society Reshaped by Science and Technology," envisions a virtual education system from kindergarten to grad school that would eventually dispense altogether with age-based grades and allow pupils to progress independently. But not even staunch proponents of online education believe academia's hallowed halls will disappear any time soon. Says WGU executive director Jeffery Livingston, "There's no anticipation that it's either technology or a traditional campus—this is just another alternative." And so it will likely remain, at least until they devise a way to download beer.

KENDALL HAMILTON and SUSAN MILLER

NEWSWEEK

COMMITMENT WATCH

What Beautiful Service 3

The "beauty part," as Ross Perot would say, of the April 27-28 bipartisan Presidents' Summit for America's Future is the way it's structured. Organizations don't get to go to Philadelphia without a concrete commitment to at-risk kids. That means less talk, more action. Not so beautiful: planners are swamped. For info, check out www.citizenservice.org.

ORGANIZATION	COMMITMENT	CHALLENGE
Kiwanis International	Engage 250,000 kids in 30 million-plus hours of service by year 2000	Hunting for Lions and Elk
300 natural-gas and electric company CEOs	Sponsor school to career experiences for 1.5 million young people	Would work in any industry
Federated Dept. Stores	Sponsor 50,000 hours of employee time in schools as tutors, mentors	Paging the rest of the retail trade
National Education Association	Recruit and train more than 1,000 retired teachers to tutor 50,000 youths in reading	How 'bout other retirees?
New York Volunteer for Youth	Provide intense one-to-one help to 25,000 youths to improve schoolwork, prevent crime	Time to clone this one

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 19, 1997

April 18, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Expanding Access to Internet-based Educational
Resources for Children, Teachers, and Parents

My number one priority for the next 4 years is to make sure that all Americans have the best education in the world.

One of the goals of my Call to Action for American Education is to bring the power of the Information Age into all of our schools. This will require connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000; making sure that every child has access to modern, multimedia computers; giving teachers the training they need to be as comfortable with the computer as they are with the chalkboard; and increasing the availability of high-quality educational content. When America meets the challenge of making every child technologically literate, children in rural towns, the suburbs, and inner city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge.

I believe that Federal agencies can make a significant contribution to expanding this universe of knowledge. Some agencies have already launched a number of exciting projects in this area. The White House has a special "White House for Kids" home page with information on the history of the White House. NASA's K-12 initiative allows students to interact with astronauts and to share in the excitement of scientific pursuits such as the exploration of Mars and Jupiter and with experiments conducted on the Space Shuttle. The AskERIC service (Education Resources Information Center), supported by the Department of Education, has a virtual library of more than 900 lesson plans for K-12 teachers, and provides answers to questions from educators within 48 hours -- using a nationwide network of experts and databases of the latest research. Students participating in the Vice President's GLOBE project (Global Learning and Observation for a Better Environment) collect actual atmospheric, aquatic, and biological data and

use the Internet to share, analyze, and discuss the data with scientists and students all over the world. With support from the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense's CAETI program (Computer-Aided Education and Training Initiative), the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has developed a program that allows high school students to request and download their own observations of the universe from professional telescopes.

We can and should do more, however. Over the next 3 months, you should determine what resources you can make available that would enrich the Internet as a tool for teaching and learning, and produce and make available a new or expanded version of your service within 6 months.

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(OVER)

You should use the following guidelines to support this initiative:

- Consider a broad range of educational resources, including multimedia publications, archives of primary documents, networked scientific instruments such as telescopes and supercomputers, and employees willing to serve as tele-mentors or answer student and teacher questions.
- Expand access not only to the information and other resources generated internally, but by the broader community of people and institutions that your agency works with and supports. For example, science agencies should pursue partnerships with professional societies, universities, and researchers to expand K-12 access to scientific resources.
- Update and improve your services in response to comments from teachers and students, and encourage educators to submit curricula and lesson plans that they have developed using agency material.
- Focus on the identification and development of high-quality educational resources that promote high standards of teaching and learning in core subjects. Of particular importance are resources that will help students read well and independently by 4th grade, and master challenging mathematics, including algebra and geometry, by 8th grade.
- Make sure the material you develop is accessible to people with disabilities. Earlier this month, I announced my support for the Web Accessibility Initiative, a public-private partnership that will make it easier for people with disabilities to use the World Wide Web.

I am also directing the Department of Education to develop a "Parents Guide to the Internet," that will explain the educational benefits of this exciting resource, as well as steps that parents can take to minimize the risks associated with the Internet, such as access to material that is inappropriate for children.

The Department of Education will also be responsible for chairing an interagency working group to coordinate this initiative to ensure that the agency-created material is of high quality, is easily accessible, and promotes awareness of Internet-based educational resources among teachers, parents, and students.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Technology/Internet direction

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 15, 1997

RADIO ADDRESS
BY THE VICE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

10:06 A.M. EST

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This is Vice President Al Gore. President Clinton asked me to fill in for him this morning as he recovers from yesterday's successful operation to repair a torn tendon in his knee.

The President's doing great, he's resting comfortably and he'll be back on his feet -- both of them -- very soon. He wanted me to thank all of you who have sent your prayers and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Over the past four years, our country has made real progress. The American economy has produced nearly 12 million new jobs. Family incomes are going up and the poverty rate is going down, and we've had the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in our nation's history.

But we face new challenges in a competitive global economy. And the one thing that will most determine our success or failure is the quality of the education we give to all of our children. That is why President Clinton has made education our nation's number one priority for the next four years. And in recent days, he and I have traveled the country to stress the importance of all Americans working together to make American public education the very best in the entire world.

Here's our goal: By the year 2000, every eight-year-old can read. Every 12-year-old can log onto the Internet. Every 18-year-old can go to college, and every American can keep on learning for a lifetime. And the President has proposed a plan of action to reach this goal and to improve American education.

We must start by focusing on our youngest children. The President's balanced budget plan will expand Head Start to one million children. And this week the President and the First Lady announced that they will host the first White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We also must open more charter schools that stay open as long as they meet high standards. And we must make the 13th and 14th years of schooling as universal as high school is today.

And the cornerstone of this plan is to raise standards so we make sure our children master the basics. We have challenged

every state to adopt high national academic standards, and then by 1999 to test fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math so that all of our children, no matter where they live or what their backgrounds, will have the same chance to make the most of their lives and their futures.

Last month, the first two states, Michigan and Maryland, announced plans to adopt these tests. And on Thursday, President Clinton spoke before the North Carolina Legislature where Governor Jim Hunt announced that North Carolina would become the third state to adopt these standards.

The national government is also taking responsibility for the schools it controls. The Department of Defense runs a school system as big as that of the State of Delaware, educating 115,000 American children at bases here and around the world. This week, the Department of Defense schools asked that their students be among the first to take the new tests when they become available. Starting in 1999, students in American classrooms from Wiesbaden to Okinawa to Camp Lejeune will learn the same rigorous material and take the same national test as students throughout the country.

On Thursday, as the President was traveling to North Carolina, I traveled to California and spoke to that state's legislature about another element of our education crusade, a national effort to reinvent the way we finance public education, to reorganize our schools in harmony with the principles of the knowledge economy. This reinventing public education effort will begin not in Washington but in communities across America. Its goal is to enlist everyone concerned about the education of children, from parents to school administrators to students themselves, to begin asking some fundamental questions about their public school systems -- in particular, how school dollars are spent.

In an age of tight budgets, we should be spending public funds on teachers and children, not on unnecessary overhead and bloated bureaucracy. Yet any educational progress we achieve is at risk if our children are asked to learn in a landscape littered with peeling paint and broken glass. With student populations at an all-time high, many of our schoolhouses are now at an all-time low -- rundown, overcrowded, and stuck with ancient technology or no technology at all.

One-third of our schools now need major repair or outright replacement. Sixty percent need major building repairs to fix sagging roofs or to repair cracked foundations. Forty-six percent even lack the basic electrical wiring to support computers, modems, and modern communications technology.

This has become a national problem and it demands national action. That is why yesterday the President sent new legislation to the Congress to provide federal assistance to help local communities and states rebuild the nation's schools. The Partnership to Rebuild America's Schools Act will provide \$5 billion over the next four years to help upgrade old schools and build new schools. This will spur \$20 billion in investments for school modernization by states, localities, and the private sector.

We urge Congress and communities to step up to this challenge. We simply cannot ask our teachers to build up children in buildings that are literally falling down. Our children deserve to be held to the highest standards, to learn from school systems that focus on teaching and not bureaucracy, inside school buildings that shine as brightly as their hopes.

On all these fronts, we are working hard to prepare our people for the 21st century. We will keep at it, and we ask for your help. Thanks for listening.

END

10:12 A.M. EST