

For teachers seeking to make better connections between their wired, IM-creating, Internet-savvy students and the social studies, this issue of *Social Education* abounds with suggestions. Software enhancements and the growth of Internet resources in different formats have paved the way for newly creative lesson plans that are supported by the easy availability of documents, audio recordings and video footage that were once expensive, hard to find, or stored in inaccessible archives.

One new resource lifts the curtain on the operations of the twentieth-century presidency. The Presidential Timeline of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, made available on the web this February by the National Archives' presidential libraries in conjunction with the University of Texas, offers a captivating inside view of the responsibilities of the presidency. In this issue's Teaching with Documents feature, Paul Resta, Betty S. Flowers, and Ken Tothoro describe the purposes and potential uses of the site, presenting documents from one of Lyndon Johnson's longest days, August 4, 1964, as examples. Users of the site can hear that day's riveting audiotapes of Johnson dealing with the Gulf of Tonkin crisis, the murder of civil rights workers, and anti-poverty programs.

The new possibilities of audio technologies in the classroom are a focal point of this special issue on instructional technology, which has been organized by our Technology Department editors, Michael J. Berson and Cheryl Mason Bolick. In one article, George B. Lipscomb, Lisa Marie Guenther and Perry McLeod point out that "many of the young people entering today's social studies classrooms are auditory learners,"(124) and review recent audio innovations that can enhance class activities. They recommend websites with valuable audio resources for teaching about historical events such as the world wars, as well as geography and current affairs.

One dimension of audio that fascinates many students is podcasting—Internet broadcasts that can be stored on portable devices like the Apple iPod. Tony Vincent and Mark Van't Hooft present the experiences of a third-grade class in Omaha, Nebraska, whose study of communities led students to create a podcast about Omaha itself. Working on the podcast energized the students and stimulated them to conduct research of high quality, knowing that readers across the Internet could tune in to their report on the city.

Many regional history records that were formerly only open to specialized historical researchers are now accessible to all. One example of an important and growing regional collection is the University of North Carolina's "Oral Histories of the American South," presented here by Cheryl Mason Bolick, Lisa Norberg and Dayna Durbin. Its archives cover subjects ranging from environmental issues and civil rights to industrialization and the role of Southern women, while lesson plans and classroom resources make it a friendly site for teachers.

Computer simulations of patterns of human behavior and

social organization once required very powerful computers and complex special programming. Ilene R. Berson and Michael J. Berson point out that sites like the StarLogo website of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have popularized these simulations and made them accessible to students. For teachers interested in organizing a simulation activity, one distinctive program they recommend is the Long House Valley model that examines the history and the mystery of the Anasazi people, who had a thriving existence in northern Arizona until an unexplained decline in population led to the abandonment of their settlements in C.E. 1300.

The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can enhance simulation activities of other kinds. Andrew J. Milson, Kathleen M. Gilbert and Brian D. Earle describe how the use of GIS boosted a class simulation of a pan-African summit. After employing a GIS interface to view African regions and understand their climate, terrain, and natural resources, students were in a better position to examine issues confronting the continent. At the simulated summit, students proposed solutions to problems such as the spread of HIV/AIDS and the threat of famine.

While most Americans now greet the spread of technology with enthusiasm, Meghan McGlenn Manfra points out that this was not always the case. In the early days of the republic, when most people lived in the countryside and the virtuous independent farmer was seen as the mainstay of the new republic, there were fears that the expansion of manufacturing might erode the republican spirit with materialism and urban corruption. Manfra presents the debate on technology in the republic's first century and examines how Americans came to link technological progress with republican values.

When participants in educational projects use digital video to record their findings, the resulting film can contribute both to educational knowledge and to establishing professional bonds between the participating educators. John M. Fischer, Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz, Zeb Kellough, and Jen Preslan describe an exchange program that has enabled teachers and students to focus in depth on the history and ethnic groups of different countries in Eastern Europe during summer visits.

This issue concludes with an examination of the "great firewall of China" in Shawn Healy's Looking at the Law column. After the explosive growth of Chinese Internet cafes, websites and weblogs, the government has taken extraordinary steps to impose government censorship and police the Internet (sometimes enlisting U.S. computer companies as collaborators). Michelle Parrini provides related teaching activities on the challenges facing free use of the Internet anywhere, and the limits set on the Internet by U.S. legislation.

As always, the editors of *Social Education* welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue at [socialed@ncss.org](mailto:socialed@ncss.org). 