

Computers & Kids

NEWS

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New Technology Fun and Functions

for Families & Friends!

Gone are the days of answering phones attached to the wall, waiting a week for film to be developed, and navigating the Dewey decimal system! Today's children can manipulate cell phones, digital cameras, and mp3 players better than many adults. Stay informed about the technology that improves the quality of children's lives!

What's so smart about a SMART Board? A lot! SMART Board is a brand of interactive electronic whiteboard that is revolutionizing how classes are taught around the world. Does your child's school have SMART boards yet?

Teachers in one Texas school

(<http://teachers.net/gazette/JAN02/mabell.html>) gave more than a dozen reasons for being excited about the SMART Board, including:

- It's a whiteboard that's colorful and children respond well to learning in color
- One-computer classrooms maximize computer access
- It's interactive! And it's a "kid magnet!"

See how the SMART technology works in a classroom at (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6hGVvXYKc4&feature=channel>).

How can Skype change a child's life? Skype is software that allows people to make phone calls and video-conference over the Internet for free! Imagine students Skype-ing Peru and Argentina to sing "Itsy Bitsy Spider" in both Spanish and English with students from the U.S.! See this blog for details: <http://langwitches.org/blog/2008/11/16/videoconferencing-with-elementary-school-students/>.

At home, Skype video conferencing improves relationships between children and their grandparents by allowing long distance grandparents to become storytellers, historians, and connections to children's roots.

(http://www.childresearch.net/RESOURCE/DETAIL/details_00106.html)

For even more amazing technology to enhance your children's learning, embrace digital storytelling, teach children to "wiki" and make a contribution to their world at <http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikikids>, and explore a universe of books available at International Children's Digital Library at www.childrenslibrary.org.

Who twitters in your life?

Twitter (<http://twitter.com>) is a social networking service for family and friends to communicate and stay in touch through the exchange of quick updates, known as "tweets", which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Twitter-savvy children can communicate with any adult users simultaneously by answering "What are you doing?" Users can get tweets by text, e-mail, or instant messaging – making staying in touch with your children easy and fun.



Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,

I was reminded of how much technology has added to our children's lives when my oldest daughter, 17-year-old Sarah, agreed to join me on a wild chase after Barack Obama's train, en route to his inauguration. With the help of Google Maps, a Garmin Nuvi GPS and a Mazda 3, we raced to Claymont, DE, where we waited for 90 minutes at a train crossing – in 20° cold. It was more than worth it. A local TV station interviewed Sarah. We both were able to wave, in person, to Michelle and Barack as they slowly rolled by. My daughter's social studies curriculum took a nice shift from abstract to concrete, in just a few seconds, reminding me that it's one thing to give your child a powerful digital camera; it's quite another to give them something to point it at.

For those of you wondering what living in the White House might be like for the two new first kids, check out this month's Little Clickers column, where we explore life in the White House, from a kid's perspective.

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