

# Distance Learning in Today's Classroom: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly



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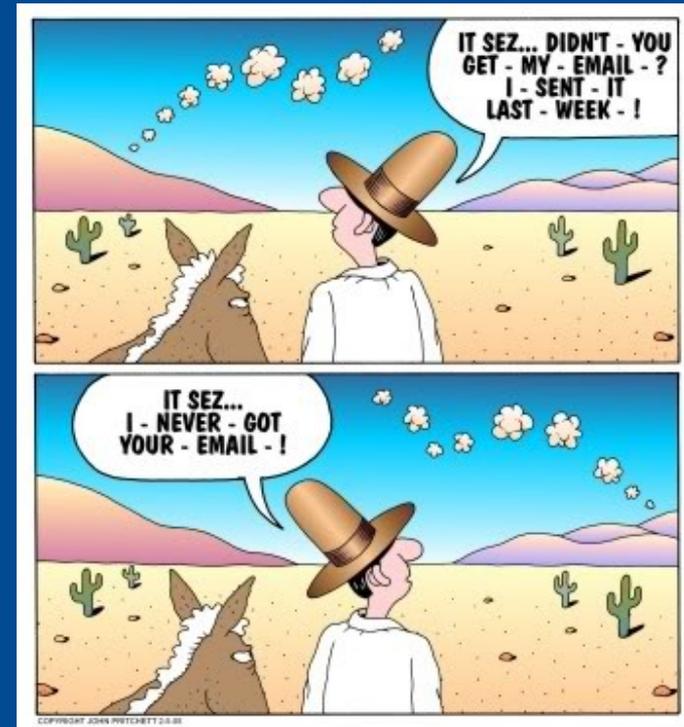
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# Outline

1. Introduction
2. Distance-Delivery Methods
3. Distribution of Course Materials
4. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Distance Delivery
5. Considerations

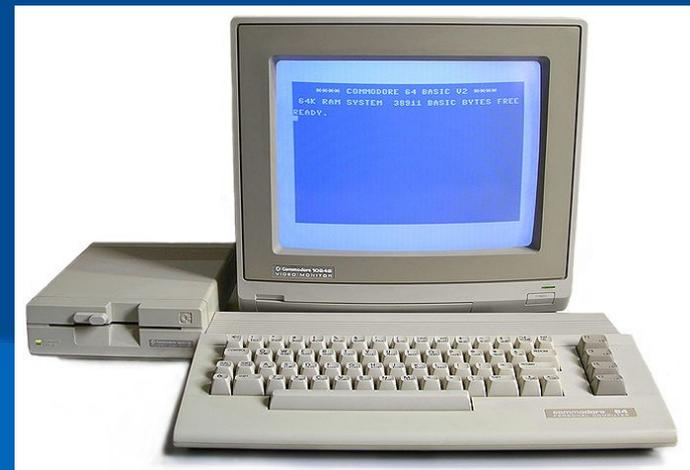
# Introduction

- Education involves a wide range of “students”
  - “Students” are not all “traditional” undergraduates
- Many “students” may not be able to attend “traditional” university courses
- A flexible, learner-centered mode of instruction to “students” who experience barriers of time and place



# Distance-Delivery Methods

- Synchronous
  - Audioconference
  - Videoconference
  - Skype
  - Elluminate Live
- Asynchronous



# Synchronous Delivery

- Audioconference
  - Description: Phone call
  - Equipment: Speaker phone, conference call service if more than one student
  - Pros: Simple, accessible, inexpensive
  - Cons: No visuals



# Synchronous Delivery

- Videoconference – Webcam
  - Description: Low-tech videophone
  - Equipment: Webcam, microphone, computer
  - Pros: Simple, accessible, inexpensive
  - Cons: Computer , bandwidth



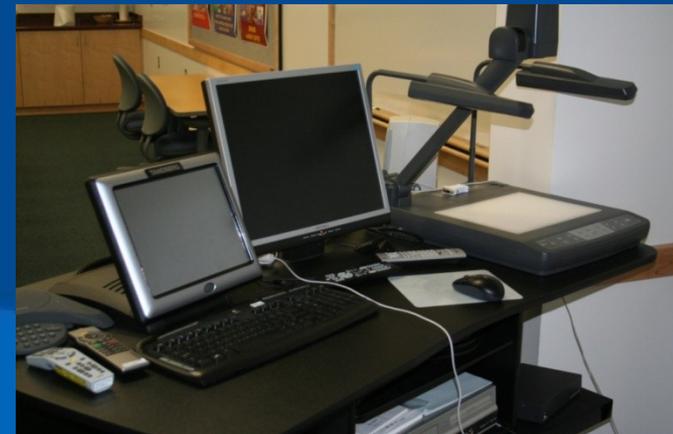
# Synchronous Delivery

- Videoconference – VCON
  - Description: High-tech video phone
  - Equipment: Camera, microphone, VCON capabilities
  - Optional equipment: Computer (for multimedia applications), ELMO, smartboard, etc.



# Synchronous Delivery

- Videoconference – VCON
  - Pros: Provides audio and visual presentations, more interactive, multimedia
  - Cons: More complex, facilities and computer , IT support, bandwidth, inaccessible if no VCON capabilities, faculty training, expensive



# Synchronous Delivery

- Skype

- Description: Software for audio and video conference services using voice over Internet Protocol
- Equipment: Microphone, webcam, computer
- Pros: Free calls on internet, can connect to cell and landline phones
- Cons: Bandwidth, expense



# Synchronous Delivery

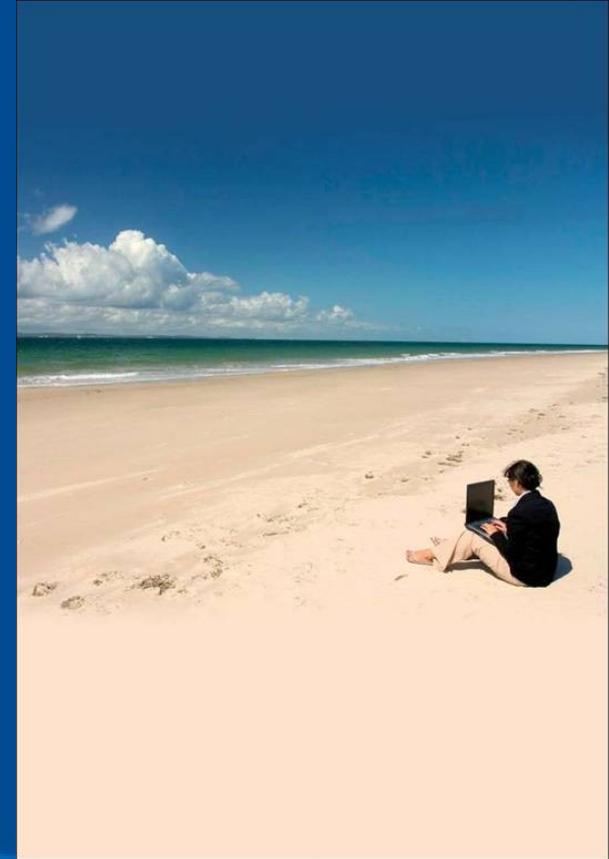
- Elluminate Live

- Description: Virtual online classroom
- Equipment: Computer, Elluminate Live software
- Pros: Powerful, flexible, full multimedia software with endless options, including file transfer, whiteboard, and recording
- Cons: Need computer, bandwidth, institute must own software



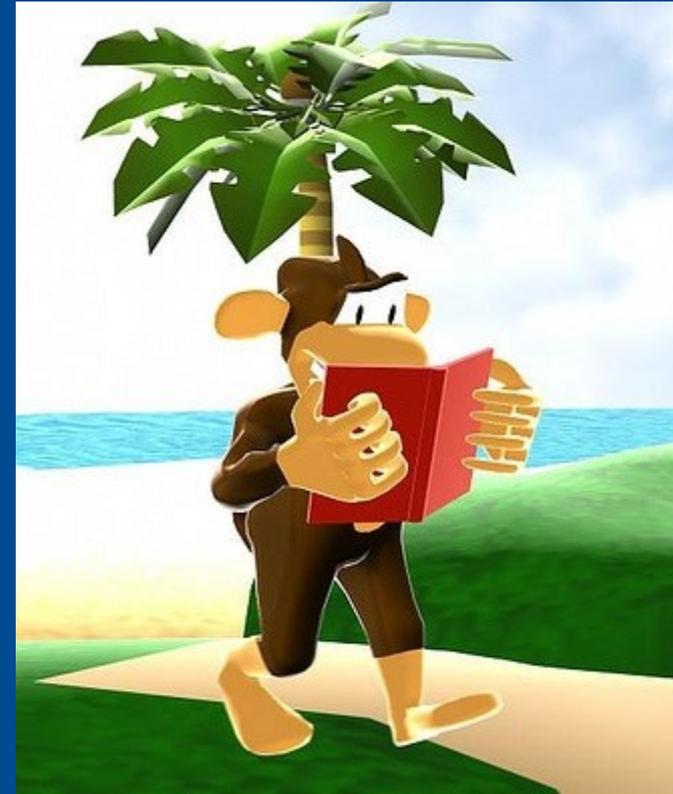
# Asynchronous Delivery

- AKA 'Independent Learning'
  - Description: Completely outside of classroom, material ranges from print media to all online
  - Equipment: Depends, but typically computer and Internet; could use podcasting and webcasting equipment



# Asynchronous Delivery

- AKA ‘Independent Learning’
  - Pros: Frees “student” from traditional, regularly scheduled meetings, diversifies “student” population, archived course material
  - Cons: Additional time and \$\$\$ for course development, students must have computer, more computer/network and IT support infrastructure, lose direct student-to-instructor interaction



# Distribution of Materials

- Course webpage
- Blackboard
- Blogs
- Chat rooms
- Social networking sites
  - Facebook, MySpace, Twitter?

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page for BIOL F288 FISH F288 STACKED 200901. The page header includes the University of Alaska Fairbanks logo and navigation links for 'My Blackboard', 'Courses', and 'Scholar'. The main content area is titled 'Announcements' and displays a list of posts from July 2009. The posts include:

- Wed, Mar 04, 2009 -- Assigned reading for gadids lecture 17 March** (Posted by Andrew Seitz): Both Pacific cod and walleye pollock fisheries are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). What is MSC certification? To answer this, look at the MSC website (<http://www.msc.org>) and familiarize yourself with the certification process. Then, read the specifics on the Pacific cod and walleye pollock fisheries of Alaska. This will take a little bit of "surfing" the MSC website. Snoop around and see what you can find.
- Thu, Feb 19, 2009 -- Presentations** (Posted by Andrew Seitz): Hello, I loaded the schedule for in-class presentations under the "Assignments" folder. Remember, practice your presentations in front of a non-fisheries type person. Keep it under 6 minutes. When your powerpoint is finished, please e-mail it to me so I can load them onto the computer in the classroom. As usual, let me know if you have any questions. Good luck. Andy
- Fri, Jan 30, 2009 -- Databases for your papers!** (Posted by Andrew Seitz): Hello, Anne Christie made a list of the most pertinent databases for finding information on fishes. It is in the "Assignments" section of blackboard. Andy
- Fri, Jan 23, 2009 -- Podcast information** (Posted by Andrew Seitz):

# The Good

- Increases access to courses
- Diversifies student population
- Financial benefits
- Social benefits



# The Bad

- Technophobia
- Must have a computer
- Bandwidth limitations
- Loss of direct student-instructor interaction
- Hidden expenses
- Isolation



# The Ugly

- Technology failure
- Students skipping or falling behind in class
- Student engagement
- Disruptive activities, e.g., e-mailing, web surfing, or IMing



# Which Method is Best?

- Considerations
  - Is the information conveyable to a remote audience?
  - What technology do you have (computers, bandwidth, etc.)?
  - Comfort and familiarity with technology
  - Technical support
  - Expense versus budget
  - Student confidence

# Conclusions

- Distance delivery offers flexible learning to a variety of “students”
- Simplest may be best, must weigh the pros and cons; a combination of different types of media may be the most effective approach
- Carefully consider different options before deciding ‘best’ method of delivery



# The End



Questions?