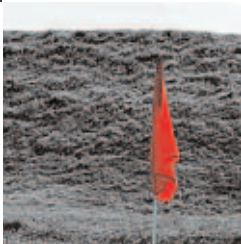


FROM THE EDITOR

Tangled Web and Digital Literacy



For all the good that we find on the Internet, it sometimes seems like “WWW” should stand for “Wild Wild West.”

Readers of a certain age will remember the 1960s TV series, which starred Robert Conrad and Ross Martin as 19th century Secret Service agents who worked with futuristic gadgets. It was aptly described as “James Bond on horseback.”

Chances are that some of you feel the same about the tools that today’s teens are using to communicate. Thanks to the rise of social networking, students are embracing technology like never before, talking to each other via Facebook, MySpace, and other platforms. The old walls of how we talk to each other have come down, thanks not to gadgets, but to your browser.

Is this a good thing? As Senior Editor Naomi Dillon notes in this month’s cover story, “A Tangled Web,” on page 14, the answer is a qualified “Yes, but...” While recent studies have shown that social networking is both here to stay and a potential boon for educators, the widespread rise of Web 2.0 technology also has created an unprecedented information and generation gap between today’s teens and adults.

I was a teen when video games first became popular, and I completely understand the draw and allure that these tools have. I can’t begin to tell

you how many quarters I spent on “Galaga” and “Pac-Man,” or how much time I spend now checking e-mail on a BlackBerry.

The question, of course, is whether students in your school district have the digital literacy necessary to separate the good from the bad, the friend from the menace, the communicator from the internal voyeur. Are your teachers, staff, and parents keeping up with these rapidly changing times so they can adequately police what is happening in cyberspace? And, if not, are you doing what it takes to help them?

No question, technology’s rapid ascent—some would say encroachment—into our lives has changed how we read, view, and digest information. Today, *American School Board Journal* is published in print and online for subscribers at www.asbj.com, where you can find additional information not in the pages you are reading now. Our staff is writing a daily blog, “The Leading Source” (<http://leadingsource.asbj.com>) that draws thousands of views per month. And recently, yes, we added our own Facebook page.

Like countless other publications, we are working diligently to bridge our own gaps. We hope, using this month’s cover story as an impetus, that you are doing the same.

Until next month...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief