

ALTEC NEWSLETTER



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ALTEC
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 Discover Technology, Engage Learners, Focus Instruction

Have you purchased new technology that is not currently being utilized to its full potential? Do you feel like your teachers could use some inspirational ideas for using this technology effectively in the classroom? Now is the time to begin planning for spring professional development days. ALTEC has more than 15 years experience teaching teachers to use technology effectively in the classroom to improve student learning. Whether it's hardware, software, or simply integrating technology into the classroom, ALTEC's talented staff of trainers can come to your school and help your teachers hit the ground running using the technology that you have. We can also provide your teachers with effective training on free online tools such as TrackStar, RubiStar, QuizStar, Google Apps and other great places on the Web that not only save time but also help you motivate your students to learn using new technologies.

ALTEC Professional development services are available in a variety of different ways. You can choose from on site or distance learning options. We have a list of professional development courses but we can also customize a training to meet your needs. Here are some of the courses that are currently available:

- Instructional Technology Integration
- An LCD Projector in the Classroom
- An Interactive Whiteboard in the Classroom
- The Power of Video-based Learning
- Math Illustrated: Using Geometer's Sketchpad
- Advanced Microsoft Office
- Creative Thinking Skills Using Handhelds
- Strategic Technology Planning
- Technology Integration Academy
- Podcasting: Educational Applications
- Custom Staff Inservice Days

Visit <http://pd.altec.org> for complete workshop descriptions or call us at 785 864 0699 for a free consultation.

INSIDE GUIDE TO 4TEACHERS.ORG

Many of you have been using 4Teachers.org for years but you probably go directly to your favorite places. Many of our tools have been updated and enhanced over the years to include some extra features you might not know about. These timesaving features can be very beneficial to your teaching program. Today we're going to examine some of the extra features you may have missed when using your favorite 4Teachers tools.



TrackPack: a feature in TrackStar TrackStar is a searchable database of more than

100,000 lessons created by educators all over the world. Many educators use this free tool frequently to create online lessons. One feature of TrackStar that you may have missed is called **TrackPack**. TrackPack was created for teachers who want to be able to quickly save links to their TrackStar account without going to the TrackStar site each time. TrackPack is an icon that you add to the links toolbar at the top of your browser window. First you download TrackPack to your computer and add the icon to the toolbar at the top of your browser. Then when you are surfing the Internet and you find a link you want to save, you click on the TrackPack Icon in your browser and a small window will open allowing you to log in to TrackPack using the same login information you use for TrackStar. The title of the Web page and the URL for the site you want to save will automatically appear in the window. You can also add an annotation if you wish, then just click Add and the site will be available to you whenever you log in to TrackStar to make a Track. You can add these links to your existing Tracks or create a new one using your TrackPack links. For complete instructions visit <http://trackstar.4teachers.org> and click on the TrackPack Tool link in the **Make a Track** section of the front page.



Top Tracks is another feature in TrackStar that you may not have noticed. As you may

know, all Tracks that are created are reviewed by TrackStar staff to make sure the content is educational and safe for children. When we come across a Track that is exceptional we label it a Top Track and it is placed on a special page with other notable tracks(or something like that?). On the front page of TrackStar in the More Information section you will find a link labeled See All Top Tracks. If you click on that link you will be taken to the page that links to nearly 300 Tracks that have earned the "Top Track." distinction

This feature can help you in two ways. First, it saves you time;for instance, if you're searching for a Track about the Solar System in our Find a Track section, you will find more than 23,000 Tracks to choose from. But if you're in a hurry, you can go to our Top Tracks page and find one that we've reviewed and deemed exceptional on this topic. You can use that Track or even use it as an example to create your own lesson. The second benefit is that if you are new to TrackStar and would like to see examples of great lessons (Tracks), you can go to Top Tracks for excellent examples. Visit <http://trackstar.4teachers.org> and click on the link in the lower left column(where is this? I couldn't find it) labeled Top Tracks to begin exploring this feature.



Analyze your Rubrics in RubiStar

RubiStar was created for teachers who want to use rubrics but don't have the time to create them from scratch. Fully customizable rubric templates are available in many different subjects that teachers can use to create rubrics that they can print or save online for later use. One option that many RubiStar users might not know about is the **Analyze your Rubrics** option.

Once you've created a rubric and the students have completed their assignment or project, you can go into RubiStar after you've graded the assignments and analyze the grades to determine the percentage of students that did well or did poorly on each concept. The way it works is, you log in to RubiStar and select the rubric for the project you want to analyze. You click the Add/Edit Results button located in the upper right hand section of your window. You are then taken to the analysis page.

Data can be entered in two ways. First, you can enter the number of students who received each rating by highlighting the cell under each rating and simply typing in the number. The second option is to simply go through the graded papers one by one and click the Update Result button under the cell for each rating and it will add one number to the number displayed each time you click it.

Once you are finished, click the Submit button and then the **Click here to return to your rubric** link to view your results. You will be shown a printable version of your results page. Some of the results will appear in red indicating that most of your students found those skills difficult. This can help you decide whether to provide more practice, more examples, or more support in this area before you move on. Visit <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> to begin analyzing your project results.



RubiStar Inspiration

Another feature in RubiStar that you might not be aware of is the RubiStar Inspirations page. Each month, RubiStar staff evaluate the rubrics created and choose exemplary projects from the list. We then contact the author of the rubric and ask them to describe their project to feature along with their rubric and any materials they want to share. This is a great place for teachers to go to get project ideas complete with detailed descriptions, worksheets, a rubric, and standards met by the project. If you're looking for new project ideas visit RubiStar Inspiration by going to <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> and clicking Featured Projects in the top left corner of the front page and the link to Inspiration Page will appear under the currently featured rubric.

SITE OF THE WEEK

Many of you visit 4Teachers.org often and go directly to a link to a favorite tool. Site of the Week is a link at the bottom of the page that is updated each week with carefully reviewed Web sites that are exceptional. If you click on the link to Site of the Week Archive you will find links to more than 200 carefully reviewed, high-quality sites divided by subject. Use the archive to find great sites for social studies, math, science, art, English, grants and funding, general curriculum, professional development, Spanish resources and more!



FREE Time-saving Resources on the Web



PERSUADE Star

<http://persuadestar.4teachers.org/>

This free online application is designed to help students in grades 5-12 write persuasive essays. Teachers can assign an essay and choose from a number of options for students to use to create their essay including: analysis of example essays, an essay planning tool, an essay writing space, student spelling feedback, and source and bibliography information. It also records how many times the student uses each option and the teacher use the teacher section to review each essay online.



Think Tank

<http://thinktank.4teachers.org/>

This free online resource is designed to help students develop a research organizer for projects and reports. Students begin the process with the topic assigned, then a random subtopic generator helps them refine the subject to a very specific topic to make it easier to research. Once they have found their specific topic they can even export it to NoteStar, a tool that collects bibliographical information during Internet research.



Conference Calendar

Meet ALTEC staff at the following Spring conferences!

TechNet

Date: March 12, 2009

Location: Raymore-Peculiar High School, Peculiar, MO

Web site: <http://education.umkc.edu/kcrpdc/technetconf09.pdf>

MACE

Mid-America Association for Computers in Education

Date: March 5-6, 2009

Location: Kansas State University Alumni Center, Manha

Web site: <http://www.mace-ks.org/maceconference.htm>

RCET-SW

Southwest Education and Technology Conference 2009

Date: March 3-4, 2009

Location: Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

Web site: <http://associations.missouristate.edu/RCET/conference.htm>

ALTEC PROVIDES SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUR EXISTING PROJECTS

If you have an existing or proposed project, ALTEC can develop and host your Web site, support your online community with discussion boards, set up your video conference, or custom-design a software application to meet your needs. Propose stronger projects and programs using ALTEC's over 15 years of expertise in educational technology, special needs, professional development, and evaluation. Please call us at 785 864 0699 to set up a free consultation.

We're happy to assist you with all your technology needs.

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