

The Conference 2005 – Mach 16-18, 2005: Look Beyond

I attended the following workshops: Ethical Hacking, Network Defense-Teaching Security Worth Jeopardizing YOUR Network, Challenges and Opportunities in Designing Information Security Curriculum, Computer Forensics & Investigations Part 1, Convergence Technician-A New IT Career, Computer Forensics and Investigations Part 2, IT Enrollments-Where are the Students?, Longhorn Reinvents the Windows Experience?, MOS and IC3 Testing, Using Pocket PCs to Teach Introductory Computer Concepts, Practical Computer Security and Tips & Tricks for Making Your Online Content Accessible.

The conference provided excellent featured speakers. The initial speaker was the Director of Information Security for MSNBC. I later saw this same speaker featured on a session with Wolf Blitzer on CNN. The other featured speaker was chair of a national committee put together by President Bush on technology education. He is also CEO of the IC3 Commission. The predominant theme from both of these speakers was that our current students **DO NOT** like lecture and they expect information in short rapid bursts. Another recurring theme was that we have to be more innovative with our teaching strategies. As educators, we are going to have to get past the idea of “seat time”that a student absolutely must be sitting in a seat (either in a classroom or outside the classroom) for a specified number of hours. Distance learning and e-learning are going to continue to become more and more prevalent. The speakers believed that IT Departments are going to have to keep fighting a battle with the perception that there are no jobs in IT

I gained valuable information at this conference about new technology, new trends in teaching technology and new developments in software. Microsoft’s new operating system tentatively called “Longhorn” was demonstrated at the conference. It is promoted as being the biggest change in operating systems since Microsoft changed from 3.1 to Windows 95. It is a memory hog....the message from the speaker: it’s going to require almost all new hardware.

The session on Tips and Tricks for Making Your Online Content Accessible was very informative. For example, I had no idea that a graphic on a web page that has a

strobe-like effect could cause seizures in some individuals. I also hadn't thought about testing a web page to make sure that all forms will function using the keyboard only.

The session titled "Using Pocket PCs to Teach Introductory Computer Concepts" was excellent. Some schools are using pocket PCs to do the following: set up and synchronize Pocket PCs, evaluate software for Pocket PCs, Pocket PC Browser Detection, Pocket PC Excel, "War Driving" to detect wireless networks, finding multimedia software for Pocket PCs, Hands on with Linux, Pocket PCs for scheduling, tasks, contacts, etc and using Microsoft Visual Basic .NET with Compact Framework to deploy on Pocket PCs.

I was able to take an IC3 exam on Microsoft Word XP. This is a globally recognized certification program and KCTCS is likely to adopt IC3 certification in the near future and their competencies as proof of computer literacy. Taking the test gave me insight into the credibility of the IC3 Exam. I came away with a new respect for the certification.

One of the speakers made the predication that hand held computer devices, in the future, would all be equipped with 10 key pads....not keyboards. He based this mainly on the fact that many younger kids and young adults can use a keypad on a cell phone as effectively and efficiently as most adults use a keyboard.

There was real concern from educators in Florida as well as many other states about the future of computer literacy. The general view among policymakers is that students coming out of high school are all computer literate. Educators see the issue differently: they get students in their classes who are far from computer literate.

I think the one of the most valuable experiences I got out this conference was the opportunity to network with educators from across the US. It helps all of us to get outside our comfort zones and experience new ideas. I learned so much both from the workshops I attended and the people I met at the conference.