

Datacasting Provides Easy Access to ECB Resources

Put away your VHS tapes and open up your classroom to datacasting, the new ECB service that delivers multimedia resources to your school district.

School districts and CESAs statewide are participating in datacasting and are reaping the benefits of this new, dynamic method to receive multimedia resources. Since the ECB placed this service into production in September 2006, 24 school districts and CESAs in Wisconsin are receiving ECB resources via datacasting.

“Receiving educational content via Datacasting is a very simple process for districts to implement,” says Nan Linde, Interactive Media Specialist for the ECB. “We’re just using technology that’s already available.” That technology is digital television. Within the broadcast digital TV data stream, there are unused spaces that can be filled with ‘packets’ of data, like video, voice, text, music—even Web pages and photos. It is the delivery of these data ‘packets’ that is called datacasting.

For schools in Wisconsin, this means teachers can receive ECB programming, like *democracy it is!*, *Into the Book*, and the Digital Wisconsin series (*Cultural Horizons of Wisconsin*, *Exploring Wisconsin Our Home*, and *Investigating Wisconsin History*) locally in their district and store it for later viewing.

Once content has been received and stored locally in the school district, teachers choose when to watch the program. To make them available for on-demand use, resources delivered via datacast should be moved from the receiving PC to long-term storage on a shared server, DVDs, or CDs. Within the limits of copyright restrictions, data can be copied, pasted, and manipulated in a spreadsheet, photo editing program, database, or other software application.

The ECB has been datacasting one series per week since September 2006, and Linde says, “Teachers love having the videos and teacher resources available in their classroom.”

Teachers also appreciate that series chosen for datacasting are selected as a part of the teacher advisory process. Adds Linde, “The long term goal is to datacast all of the series available in the parade of programs, if allowed.”

Though datacasting requires a minimal one-time initial set up cost, all ECB resources are free. If you’re wondering if your school district has or could receive ECB resources via datacasting, just talk to your school librarian, IT staff, or media specialist. For more information about Datacasting, contact your local RETA director, visit www.datacastwisconsin.org, or send an e-mail to datacastsupport@ecb.state.wi.us.