

## **Madison school first in nation to work with instructional digital TV**

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Madison School First in Nation to Work with Instructional Digital TV

Contact: Madison Metropolitan School District

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Some 8th graders at Cherokee Middle School are among the first students in the country exploring the possibilities that digital television (DTV) holds as an educational tool. The Digital Classroom Project provides students with a searchable media library composed of 15-plus hours of digital full-screen video, more than 1,000 Web pages, and a host of other digitized resources.

Cherokee is the first of seven schools nationwide involved in this groundbreaking venture.

The Digital Classroom Project centers on the study of westward expansion in U.S. history, in particular the Lewis and Clark expedition. According to one of the Cherokee teachers involved in the Project, Jane Behrens, the Cherokee students are like the explorers Lewis and Clark, going "into the unknown," as they used this new technology.

The media library's content is accessible via the school's computer network, which received digital datacasts supplied by the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board (ECB). Datacasting is an aspect of DTV that lets broadcasters transmit computer-like (digital) data along with a video program to a computer serving as a receiver. The content is also available via CD-ROM and the Internet.

The high-quality video resources allow students to view primary sources, see stories of historical figures, and explore various historical perspectives. To share their newly acquired knowledge, students package video and other media into computer-generated presentations or Web pages.

Behrens thinks that these innovations might change the way students are taught history. "It could become less chronological and linear. It would have much more depth," she said.

The Digital Classroom Project has been developed by the Public Broadcasting Service and is being facilitated locally by the ECB. The Project is made possible by PBS and by funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the

Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. Technical support for this project is being provided by the school's technology specialist and by MMSD technical services.