

of the Technological Mind

systems. In 1997 serious talks formalized into a regional partnership (WERLnet – the Windsor-Essex Regional Libraries Network) and we began the intensive search for a large client-server system we could network and share among us. It took two years to make the choices, chase the grants and develop ways we could share the network and the workload. I gained a systems administrator role, helping to define policy and standard practices, and provide regional training.

TL: How did you get into the ICT side of the role?

DB: Board amalgamation in 1998 expanded my role, adding Web-based responsibilities. I had been working with HTML and coding for several years and took on the challenge of working with a small team to develop the new Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board's Web site. (www.wecdsb.on.ca) This work added the title of web master to my current role and I now have the day-to-day responsibility for the ongoing design and maintenance of the WECDSB corporate Web site. I spend many evening hours each week staying on top of rapidly changing Web technology. I've carried this learning forward into providing system-wide training for Web authoring tools, teaching courses in HTML editors, image editing software, movie editing software and Flash. I also provide support for all the school Web teams. It's a real joy to see the calibre of their work when kids have the chance to showcase their school!

For professional growth, I added level III qualifications for Computers in Education to my teaching certificate to complement my librarianship qualifications.

As part of the board's IT team, I also teach regular after-school and summer Institute courses on interesting topics such as Web Design, Web Quest Development, Ethics, Image Editing, and Effective Internet Research Strategies.

When a writing team was formed to develop the Board's ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) curriculum document, I was invited to be a writer and was a constant

advocate for the inclusion of research skills and the ethical use of information. As the board continues to promote the integration of ICT, I am part of the annual professional development in-service team, helping classroom teachers to implement the ICT expectations.

The development and support of eLearning (online courses for our secondary school students) is an area of interest I'm currently involved in. I see online learning to be a valuable skill our students will need as they face continuing education and retraining opportunities throughout their adult lives. Our hope is to have all students take a credit through eLearning before they graduate. In support of this Board ICT vision, I provide technical support and training for our eLearning teachers and work at increasing the level of online reference tools licensed for students' home access.

Women In Technology is another activity I take an active role in. Organized by IBM and coordinated by Julie Parkyn, our local rep, the WIT program pulls together a group of women across the community who work in various technology roles. We provide half-day mentoring sessions for grades 7 and 8 girls, encouraging them to consider a future career in technology by keeping the doors open to math and science credits in secondary school. Picture a noisy, busy gym filled with 30 to 40 girls, seven or eight mentors, loads of laptops and the full challenge to create team Web sites! A session like this is a real boost of energy!

TL: Have there been any outstanding moments for you?

DB: There have been several. Three that come immediately to mind are:

■ Our WERLnet project for the regional systems and library network was the 1999 winner of Industry Canada's Distinction Award GOLD MEDAL for Innovative Use of Technology promoting municipal partnerships. Steve Salmons, then the CEO of the Windsor Public Library, made the trip to Ottawa to accept the award on behalf of the partnership. He followed up with a presentation