ECAWA Annual General Meeting

Held at Churchlands Senior High School on the 21st of November.

The guest speaker, Vic Gecas, Head of ICT at Sacred Heart College, spoke on the topic ‘Vic Gecas in Cyberspace – My life as a Geek’. In his talk Vic linked the history of his family from the 1930s with the history of computing, and illustrated his presentation with some fascinating images, facts and anecdotes linking in his own family history. Paul Reid has added a video of the presentation to the ECAWeb site.

Immediately after this speech, the outgoing President of ECAWA, Mike Leishman, called Vic back to the front of the meeting to announce that Vic had been named the ECAWA 2008 Educator of the Year. The presentation of this award is a highlight of ECAWA’s calendar, and the members present were very enthusiastic in their congratulations to Vic.

After the election of the ECAWA Committee, in General Business, Vic raised the matter of an appropriate way for ECAWA to commemorate the lives and record the contributions of ECAWA members who have passed away, mentioning Kim Lego, Beatrice Lai, Ken Hopkins, Jim Fuller and others. After some discussion it was decided that the incoming ECAWA Committee should investigate the establishment of a Roll of Honour.

At the end of the meeting Paul Dench, spoke to the group about some of his computing experiences in ‘the early days’, in the United Kingdom and in Carnarvon, WA, and the members present shared pizza and conversation.

The ECAWA 2008 / 2009 Committee

At the 2008 Annual General Meeting the following were elected unopposed to the ECAWA Committee:

President: Robin Hutton
Vice President: Jeff Herd
Secretary: Lynley McKernan
Treasurer: Val Baird
Tertiary Coordinator: Paul Newhouse
Secondary Coordinator: Mike Leishman
Primary Coordinator: Paul Fuller
General Committee Members: Anne Edgar, Paul Reid, Jeremy Pagram

Mike Leishman will serve as ‘Immediate Past President’ of ECAWA for the coming year.

The Committee will be looking to fill several vacancies including the LOGIN Editor position and some General Committee places in the coming weeks, so please email president@ecawa.wa.edu.au if you would like to discuss joining the Committee.

Keep an eye on ECAWeb for more news from ECAWA.
**ECAWA 2008 Educator of the Year**

Each year the ECAWA Educator of the Year Award acknowledges the efforts of an ECAWA member who, through the use of information and communication technologies, has made an exceptional contribution to the learning of students, to the teaching profession and to the work of the Educational Computing Association of Western Australia (Inc).

The 2008 ECAWA Educator of the Year is Vic Gecas, Head of ICT at Sacred Heart College, Sorrento.

Vic is a very highly respected and long standing member of ECAWA, and is also highly respected and valued by his Principal and colleagues. On being told that this award would be presented to Vic, Mr Ian Elder, Principal of Sacred Heart College, commented, ‘Great choice - In reading Vic’s nomination for this Award I thought to myself - who is doing more? and - who else is producing such high quality work?… I was Principal at Sacred Heart College when my previous Head of ICT, Trevor Galbraith won this prestigious Award so I am aware of the quality required to be the successful recipient.’

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**KICK-START LEARNING POTENTIAL IN THE CLASSROOM**

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<td><strong>Wireless, robust and user-friendly, our egg-shaped Activote devices really get the thumbs-up from students. It’s a fast, effective way to get opinions from the entire class, motivating even the most reluctant pupils.</strong></td>
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Thank you to the committee for their work over the year to enable ECAWA to proceed into the future. Special thanks to Lynley who has guided me over the year.

I took on this position this time last year with the hope of achieving much, but I don't believe I have achieved that much at all and thus I have been disappointed. However, when I said this to one of the committee, I was assured that we had progressed.

**Conferences**

The major achievement for this year was the annual conference. Held at Canning College, it was deemed a success by all those that offered comments to me and from the limited evaluation that was supplied. The keynote speakers were just right for the conference and gave delegates much to think about. Thanks to Aiden, Bronwen and Sue, there were 35 presenters who delivered very high quality professional development over the course of the two days. Thank you to those presenters. There were two major sponsors, AV Media and WJ Monrief as well as another nine trade sponsors. The major prize was a Promethean IWB. Without the work of the ECAWA team behind the scenes to put it all together, there would have been no conference. This team worked for three months to put it all together and the results was a credit to them. Special thanks must go to Lynley for taking on board the job of caterer at the last minute. Lastly, thanks to Alan Genoni, Principal of Canning College, and all of his staff who made the facilities available to us at no cost.

The second achievement of significance was the Echalk 2.0 Live unconference held at Newman College. This was a one day event sponsored by AV Media and the facilities of Newman College were provided free of charge. This provided members with a full day of professional development free of charge. More importantly, it demonstrated that events such as this can be successfully run. Although the format was not fully that of an unconference, it was a start in the right direction and positive signs of future successful unconferences were displayed.

Following this was the very successful Satellite Unconference that was initiated by Merriwyn Spicer-Wensley and held at Guildford Grammar where more than 36 people had a great day of free professional development over the day. Thank you to the organizers, presenters and Guildford Grammar for providing the facilities, refreshments and lunch.

Other conferences at which ECAWA was involved were the T&E conference held at Edith Cowan University and the ACEC’08 held in Canberra where ECAWA members presented sessions. Thank you to those members.

**Web Site**

This year, we launched our new website. www.ecawa.edu.au.

A special thank you must go to Paul Reid for spending many hours in setting this up. As well, he has set up some cool things in the Experiments section, especially the Community Bookmarks section.

**External Involvement**

While in the position of President, I was involved in the following:

**Western Australian Information Technology and Telecommunications Awards (WAITTA)**

The purpose of the WAITTA is to recognise outstanding performance and contributions by members of the IT&T community in Western Australia. In my position of president, I was invited to participate in the judging of the student category. The students were Honours students from University of WA, Curtin University and Edith Cowan University.

**Department of Industries and Resources - Skills Leadership Group**

This group consisted of representative of the IT Industry, Computing Departments of Universities and TAFE, WA Education Authorities, ACS, SCITECH and ECAWA. The role of the group was to consider the issues facing ICT skills in WA and report to government. Sub groups were formed and many meetings were held. A final report is to be made to the new Liberal government in relation to the findings and recommendations of the Group. There was also a website created to promote the ICT industry in WA. (www.ictwa.org.au) and the ICT:Start Here Go Anywhere campaign was launched.

**Australian Council for Computers in Education (ACCE)**

Over the course of the year, I attended three meetings of the ACCE. Through the ACCE, we had representation at the national level in relation to the DER funding. At the ACEC conference where Julia Gillard spoke, we were reassured that the current Labor government is actively seeking the advice of the ACCE in relation to the future planning of the Digital Education Revolution.

However, on another note, there was a lot of time spent in trying to address the future of the ACCE and the role it should play at the national level. This came about principally...
because groups in NSW and Victoria have been seeking a position on the ACCE board along with the current membership. Although the constitution does allow this to happen, ECAWA sees this as a break away from the traditional makeup of the board where each state has one representative and we are strongly stating our case as to why the status quo should remain and the groups not be allowed to join as a separate group.

Other

PTC WA Awards

Congratulations to Paul Newhouse for receiving the award as the ECAWA nomination.

Value Adding Quest

Thank you to Jeff Herd for being our representative.

AIT ARM Panel

Thank you to Paul Newhouse for being our representative on the panel.

CS ARM Panel

I was the representative on this panel.

Mike Leishman
ECAWA President 2008

As teachers of Computer Science and AIT plan for next year, Paul Newhouse encourages teachers to look at SIPIT (Schools and Industry Pilot for Information and Technology). Check out the website at:

http://www.sipit.wa.edu.au/

An option you may like to consider is to canvas local business or organisations to become involved (e.g. through parents) in providing project problems for your students and use SIPIT as a vehicle for presenting the idea to them and managing the process.

If you become involved, you will need to support your students by scoping the projects for them and communicating this to the business or organisation contact person. That is, clearly outline the limitations of what the students can do and the amount of time they can spend on it.

All About SIPIT

The concept is that business and other organizations, including the not-for-profit sector, will provide real problems requiring an IT-based solution that AIT or CS students may be capable of tackling. Information about the problem is provided through the SIPIT website that employs a Moodle back-end and then groups of students may select problems and 'tender' to complete the work. The organization providing the problem acts as the client with, in most cases, all communication occurring electronically, and determines how many groups of students they are happy to communicate with on the problem. Students then analyse the projects and scope out a proposal to solve the problem. Once the industry and students are agreed on a scope of the work, the students start the project. Within the agreed timeframe students are supervised by their teacher to provide a solution upon which they receive an evaluation from the ‘client’.

SIPIT was relaunched in 2008 as a joint initiative of the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and the Curriculum Council of Western Australia. A pilot scheme was developed a number of years ago to increase the involvement of industry in the education of students in Information Technology. In 2003, it won the DET Innovations Award, and in 2004 was a finalist in the Education Section of the Premier's Award.

The project has resulted from the passionate advocacy of Karl Gartner, of Morley Senior High School, and Anne Griffiths, of the CCI, who have put together a working party that includes teachers, CCI and industry representatives and Curriculum Council representatives. I represent ECAWA on the working party. Much of the work has been done by Sandra Robinson, CCI representatives and the Curriculum Council through Dave Wood and Ian Gaynor.

The aim now is for some projects to be available through the website for first semester. This initiative has a lot of potential, particularly for Year 11 students, and should be relatively easy for inclusion within the two courses where the work could be included within the assessment schedule as a production task. Care has been taken to structure SIPIT to match the assessment requirements of the courses. I would encourage all AIT and CS teachers to look at the website (http://www.sipit.wa.edu.au/), consider the possibilities and perhaps SIPIT and see!

Paul Newhouse, Ph.D
Associate Professor, School of Education
Edith Cowan University
Email p.newhouse@ecu.edu.au
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ECAWA PRIZE GIVE AWAY

All ECAWA members with a status of "financial" as of December 31st, 2008 will be entered into a draw to win one of these pens - donated by AV MEDIA Systems - for their nominated school. Conference attendees who completed the entry form will have an extra entry in the draw. The winner will be notified and the results published on ECAWeb.

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