

Title of Session: WebTools - Web Talkster

Moderator: Pam Berger

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Room: Hot Tub Conference Room

BJ adjusts the temperature of the hot tub

HaroldJ: I am new at this. This is my first time.

PamB joined the room.

BJ: Harold, Christin is also new

BJ . o O (and we all start out as newbies)

BJ waves hi to Pam

BJ: Pam is the discussion leader for this event

PamB waves to BJ

ShereeR: joined the room.

PamB: Hi Harold

BJ: Hi, Sheree. Welcome

ShereeR: : Hello!

PamB: Hi Christin

PamB: Hello Sheree

HaroldJ: Hi, I am a student at U of H.

ChristinHL: : Hi !

BJ: we usually start all the discussions in TI with introductions

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

ChristinHL: : I am a preservice teacher and student at UH

ShereeR: : I am an artist / art educator at a school for severely emotionally disturbed students K-12 in St. Petersburg Florida

HaroldJ: I am working on my teacher's certification. I need as much help as I can get.

PamB: I'm an educational technology consultant. I was a school librarian for 18 years in New York.

PamB: Welcome!

PamB: I wanted to show you a free software program called Web Talkster. Has anyone ever used it or heard about it?

ShereeR: : No, I want to know about it

HaroldJ: No. I haven't.

ChristinHL: : no, I have not

PamB: I just came across it recently. I just received an LSTA grant to teach teachers and librarians design curriculum based websites for special population students...

PamB: ELL students, special ed kids, etc.

ShereeR: : Cool

ChristinHL: : uh-huh

PamB: SO I'm on the always looking for programs that will help these kids use the Web.

PamB: When I first found Webtalkster you could download it directly for a website...

HaroldJ: I am still here. Can you elaborate?

PamB: but now, as a week or so ago, you need to order a CD and pay 4...8.95 for

shipping and handling

ChristinHL: : I read that special needs students really excel using technology to learn

PamB: which isn't so bad because it has about eight free programs on it.

PamB: I think so. it helps them focus. and stay on task ..sometimes.

PamB: I have put together a web page or two to explain what the program does...

PamB: I'll post the url and you can go look at my pages then let's come back in 10-15 minutes...

PamB: and we can discuss it.

ShereeR: : I can stand as a witness as to how technology makes a HUGE difference while working with special ed kids. It is amazing!

PamB: The url is <http://www.infosearcher.com/webtalkster.htm>

BJ: click on the hyperlink to open a new window

ShereeR: : OK Pam, I just went through the description and can you tell me again, did you say you currently can't get this without paying money or what did you say??

ShereeR: : I would love to play with this program! This would be GREAT for my kids. Of course, the young students could use it, but I have high school kids who still read on a 2nd or 3rd grade level. This would be wonderful for them too.

ChristinHL: : This is awesome!

ChristinHL: : And it's free you say?

PamB: yes it's free. Click on the URL under the title on my page and it will take you to the website that offers it.

PamB: You can choose a Spanish TTS engine, and the browser will read a Spanish content web page in that language with the selected voice.

ShereeR: : OH NO!!!! We are a MAC district. They don't have a Mac version. POO!

PamB: I have never done that but it sounds incredible....great for foreign language students.

PamB: No unfortunately they don't.

BJ: bummer. We're in the same boat

PamB: I have been looking for other web browsers like this but haven't found any.

ShereeR: : Well, so much for that idea.

PamB: I'll keep my eyes open for Mac ones.

ChristinHL: : I agree with you and truly feel that this is a great tool to use in the classroom

ShereeR: : Bye

ShereeR: left the room (signed off).

PamB: There is also a tool called Text Talkster on the CD that reads anything copied into notepad...such as in Word.

PamB: I particularly like the little characters you can have to do the talking in Web Talkster....they are very cute.

ChristinHL: : I know that it said that the voice in the talkster is robotic

PamB: It's not bad. I have heard worse.

ChristinHL: : how much would I spend if I wanted something more realistic

PamB: I have only seen text to voice programs, not web browsers .

HaroldJ: I am just getting back. I am really impressed.

ChristinHL: : Yeah, I love that you can choose the characters!

PamB: and they are all more serious...no fun little characters.

PamB: IBM and ATT both [have] them...I'm not sure about the price.

HaroldJ: I am doing a course in elementary reading and I will send the link to my professor.

ChristinHL: : Well, I'm pretty sure that it would be costly

ChristinHL: : And as a beginning teacher...I can't afford that! -)

ChristinHL: : Thank you for informing us about talkster.

HaroldJ: I think it will also help struggling readers

PamB: you're very welcome.

ChristinHL: : I agree

PamB: Me too!

ChristinHL: : I guess we just need to remember that children have different learning styles

ChristinHL: : And especially now, young kids can do wonders using the computer

PamB: We are going to try it with ESL students.

ChristinHL: : So this would definitely reach those children

HaroldJ: I do think they should have made a few more ethnic characters.

ChristinHL: : Pam, didn't you say that they can change their skin color?

PamB: yes, I think that would be a good idea. I think most of them are borrowed from other companies.

ChristinHL: : well, thank you Pam and BJ

PamB: Skins are referring to the design...color and shapes...on the web browser...

HaroldJ: I was thinking like Chinese, Mexican etc etc

ChristinHL: : Hope to see you in other forums!

PamB: not the color of the character's skins.

ChristinHL: : Oh

ChristinHL: : hahaha

PamB: skins help to personalize the browser.

PamB smiles

HaroldJ: Hahaha.....The characters would make the students relate more.

ChristinHL: : That was silly of me

PamB: yes and you can move the characters around the screen.

ChristinHL: : I hope you all have a wonderful evening

PamB: no not at all, Christin

ChristinHL: left the room (signed off).

HaroldJ: I am really glad you showed me this site.

PamB nods and smiles.

PamB: I wish it was a type of program that we could go and play with now.

HaroldJ: My classmates are all elementary teachers so they will benefit more from it.

HaroldJ: I had a wonderful time tonight . My first time and I thank you soooooo much.

PamB: great, come back again. I hope to meet you again. It was fun talking to you.

PamB: Ti is a great place to meet people and I always learn so much.

BJ: Harold, make sure you take a look at all the other discussions scheduled on the calendar

HaroldJ: I certainly will. thanks.