Title of Session: BirdSleuth-Student Inquiry through eBird
Moderator: Jennifer Fee
Title of File: 20090520birdsleuthebird
Date: May 20, 2009

Room: BirdSleuth Group

PhilK: Just downloaded & opened the e-bird tutorial.

JenniferMF: Phil, let me know if you have comments on the tutorial. We are trying to get more teachers "in the door" with some free supports.

PhilK: Looks pretty basic. I'll have to study it. Was hoping to see details about ways my students can use data. Did the sharing instructions for groups make it into the tutorial?

JenniferMF: It is pretty basic. OK, now I understand what you are looking for. More support for using the "data out" part of eBird.

JenniferMF: What do you mean, "sharing instructions for groups"?

BrianGst1 joined the room.

BrianGst1: Hey Jennifer, sorry I'm late!

BJB2 waves hi to Brian

BJB2: you're just in time, Brian...you beat the rush!

BrianGst1: Great

BJB2 hopes Brian brought all his friends with him!

JenniferMF: Hi Brian, thanks for stopping in =)

PhilK: When You have a groups of students, you want them to share their data rather than everyone enter it.

JenniferMF: So, by way of introductions... Brian, Phil is a teacher who regularly counts and submits eBird data with students. He's in Oregon... teaching right now! So he is "in and out" of the discussion.

JenniferMF: Phil, Brian is one of the project leaders of eBird... so he can definitely answer any technical questions you might have.

BJB2 . o O (that doesn't make sense to me, Phil...what do you mean by share rather than

each individual enter their own data?)

BrianGst1: OK. I think appointing a single student to enter the day's data and then 'sharing' the checklist with the other kids would be fine. I'm not sure how that fits into the BirdSleuth curriculum though.

JenniferMF: It didn't when we wrote it (before the "share checklist" feature.

BrianGst1: Sharing allows multiple birders who participated in the same birding event to 'share' a single checklist, meaning just one person has to enter the data.

BrianGst1: Yes, that's new since BirdSleuth was written

JenniferMF: (the issue is... if 20 students count the same 3 crows and 4 chickadees... they shouldn't all enter it)

JenniferMF: We need to update the BirdSleuth materials to include info about the "share checklist" feature.

JenniferMF: Brian, that's pretty stable, right? I mean, it will be there for the next school year at least?

BrianGst1: Absolutely, it's very popular

BrianGst1: This was designed to address issues about duplicate samples in the data so it's not going anywhere, if anything it will be expanded and improved.

JenniferMF: Cool. Gabby and I can work with you guys to write that into the materials.

JenniferMF: The other thing that teachers (and me!) would like to do more of is use the eBird data out.

JenniferMF: i.e. have students query the database... use the data to answer their own questions.

DeborahH joined the room.

BrianGst1: Yes, those tools have also been improved since BirdSleuth was written, and there's some new stuff there

BJB2: welcome, Deborah!

JenniferMF: hi Deborah.

JenniferMF: Deborah, do you happen to be familiar with eBird?

BJB2 . o O (or BirdSleuth)

BJB2 . o O (Deb is shy?)

DeborahH left the room.

BJB2: oops

JenniferMF: (sometimes people just stumble in and apparently don't mean to)

BJB2: she hasn't responded to me in reception either...may not see her chat window

JenniferMF: It is too bad that Phil is teaching... the discussion would be more lively =) Tonight might be a bust.

BrianGst1: I'll stand by for a while

BJB2: if Phil is getting some questions answered, that's good

JenniferMF: But at least I have added to my "need to do" list: take to eBird folks about adding "sharing" and about "data out"

BJB2: and his input is also of great value, I'm sure

JenniferMF: Thanks for standing by... we can all kind of work in the background on other things, too (I'm admitting that that's what I am doing)

PhilK: Sorry to be in & out. My students are keeping me busy this afternoon with a lab activity. I'l likely have lots of questions after I read the transcript of today's session

BJB2: darn kids...school would be so much nicer without them bothering the teachers all the time!

BJB2 winks at Phil

PhilK: Jen, did you understand what I meant about the sharing of data entry for student groups. Some of my students figured this out toward the end of our bird watching season this year. They entered e-mail addresses & were able to share data rather than duplicate it.

JenniferMF: Well, as I said, we can always put you in touch with eBird staff via email and/or get your input as we work on some new materials with them, Phil.

JenniferMF: Yes-- I know what you mean... that "share checklist" feature that you and I chatted about. Was it hard for them to do?

BJB2: Deb is coming back

DeborahH joined the room.

BJB2: and there she is! Hi again, Deborah!

JenniferMF: hi again, Deborah!

DeborahH: hi, thanks

JenniferMF: First time in Tapped In?

DeborahH: second or third

JenniferMF: Do you happen to be familiar with eBird or BirdSleuth?

DeborahH: no, but it sounds interesting

JenniferMF: One purpose for this session is to share some specific ideas on helping you support students in their use of the "eBird" citizen science project. Have you heard of "citizen science" per chance?

DeborahH: no

JenniferMF: Well, eBird is a "citizen science" project that is free and pretty easy to use. People from all over North America (and in a growing number of Central American countries) send their data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, where our scientists can use it to see what is happening to bird populations over a large geographic scale.

JenniferMF: One way to think about citizen science: one scientist could probably not collect the amount of data in her lifetime, that our citizen scientists collect in a day! Plus, because citizen scientists are all over—we can answer larger questions, too.

JenniferMF: It looks like you are computer science teacher, Deborah?

PhilK: One question I had was whether teachers could have some sort of administrative control of their student's e-bird accounts. My students from year to year are always forgetting their usernames & passwords. Most end up opening a whole new account when they forget. Many of these students forget which e-mail address they used to sign up.

DeborahH: yes

DeborahH: yes

JenniferMF: Deborah...This is a great way to get kids involved with looking at real-

world data via an online database.

JenniferMF: Phil, let's see if Brian has some feedback on that...

PhilK: I have also noticed some differences of function between the regular e-bird Site and the BirdSleuth e-Bird Site

JenniferMF: I am going to give you some links... be sure to press the CTRL when you click the link or enable popups, so that the link will open in a new window =)

BrianGst1: Phil, the best way to handle that is to use YOUR email address and you can then create accounts for each student. If the student wants to continue with eBird then can overtake the account and then provide their personal email address as the contact. This way you'll have all their info in say a spreadsheet.

JenniferMF: First, you can find eBird at http://www.ebird.org

PhilK: Many of my students are too lazy to enter in the whole URL for the birdsleuth e-bird site and end up going directly to the regular e-bird site.

JenniferMF: Phil, the data all goes the same place.

JenniferMF: We just tried to "simplify" things on the BirdSleuth eBird site (Brian, you guys used to call it a "clone")

BrianGst1: We prefer 'portal' now

JenniferMF: Deborah, to help teachers use eBird with your students, BirdSleuth is offering a free resource called "eBird Advice for Educators" http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/ebird

JenniferMF: I like "portal" better than "clone"

JenniferMF: Brian, it doesn't really matter where his kids enter their data, right? It goes the same place and they can access it either way with their username?

BJB2: Deborah, did you get the eBird url?

DeborahH: should I check out these links while we're chatting, or will we become disconnected?

BrianGst1: Yes, that's true. The real advantage to entering data through BirdSleuth is that we, and the analysts, can easily separate it from the rest for any kind of analysis.

BJB2 . o O (you may need to hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard when you click, Deb)

JenniferMF: I'd look at them later, frankly. We are kinda running low on time already!

JenniferMF: BTW, Deborah, We also offer a whole kit around the eBird project , called Most Wanted Birds http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/modules/most-wanted-birds-1/birdsleuth-most-wanted-birds that will provide lesson plans, journal pages, resource articles, and helpful tools like posters and full-color bird ID cards. There's a fee for that kit, but it's a great resource!

BJB2: the urls will be in your transcript, Deborah

DeborahH: this is a very exciting project!

BJB2: if you don't get the transcript, Deb, email me at bjb@tappedin.org and I'll send you mine

DeborahH: thanks

DeborahH: what's in the most wanted birds kit?

BJB2 . o O (little pictures of birds with mustaches drawn on them ;-))

DeborahH: cute

BJB2 sits on her hands and tries to behave

JenniferMF: lessons, journals, resource materials like CD-Rom bird quizzes... materials to help kids learn to identify birds.

JenniferMF: which of course is critical of they are going to be entering their count data into a database the conservation scientists and others use!

JenniferMF: (by the way, the fact that their data is really used is really motivating for students-- both to learn about birds and count accurately and enter their data online.)

JenniferMF: After you check out those websites, don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

DeborahH: can we jump in at any time, or is there a beginning and ending date?

JenniferMF: And I encourage you to join this BirdSleuth group so you'll learn about upcoming events and such =)

JenniferMF: Jump in anytime. It is a year-round project.

PhilK: Is there a tutorial on how my students can import data from e-bird into MS Excel?

JenniferMF: "Any bird, anywhere, any time!"\

JenniferMF: Phil, not from BirdSleuth.... Brian... do you guys have any tutorials that teachers might find helpful?

PhilK: Can they upload data from Excel to e-Bird

DeborahH: can it be downloaded as a csv file?

BrianGst1: Phil, they can, but it needs to be in the correct format. See details on that here:

BrianGst1: http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/using-the-ebird-data-import-tool

BrianGst1: You can also download data from your account by going to My eBird and then clicking "Download My Data"

PhilK: could a student customize e-Bird to accept data of interest to compare with bird observation data?

BrianGst1: Phil, I don't understand the question

JenniferMF: Not sure I know what you mean, either.

PhilK: Say if a student wants to compare barometric pressure with birds. Or if the presence of squirrels has an effect on the birds.

JenniferMF: Oh, no, I don't think so... you can keep data like that in the "notes" section...

PhilK: looking for more ways students can use e-bird for their own inquiry projects.

JenniferMF: but I don't think eBird can pull that stuff out.

BrianGst1: You can certainly use the 'comments' field to record those kinds of data. Many data, like weather, climate, etc. are collected by automated sensors elsewhere, and analysts would pull those together with the bird data in a model outside the limits of what eBird can do

BJB2 . o O (note to Deb: what you are seeing is the staff at BirdSleuth working with a teacher who uses BirdSleuth with his students...kind of cool how participants' input is valued)

JenniferMF: Oops, yep, "comments" not "notes" section =)

BJB2: Deborah, if you click one time on Phil K under the here tab to the left of this chat and then click on the green i at the bottom, you will see Phil's ID....and some urls where he has photos of his students BirdSleuthing!

JenniferMF: Hey, I hate to cut myself out... but I have really booked myself up. I have another commitment in a half hour that is 40 minutes away =(

JenniferMF: Thanks Brian, so much, for being our "guest speaker"...

BJB2: oops! Thanks, Jen. Drive carefully

BJB2: Deborah, join this group and come back to look at some of the resources...

JenniferMF: If Phil has specific questions about eBird that I can't answer, I've always just forwarded them to you guys =)

BJB2: you will also get reminders from Jen about upcoming discussions

BJB2 . o O (if you don't know how to join a group, let me know)

JenniferMF: Gotta bike home, then the drive is easy =)

JenniferMF: See you all soon, I hope!

BJB2 waves bye to Jen.

JenniferMF left the room (signed off).

BJB2: any questions, Deborah?

BJB2 . o O (I promise no stupid remarks about birds ;-))

BrianGst1: See ya, thanks

DeborahH: I want to join this group

BJB2 waves bye to Brian. Thank you

BJB2: Deborah, did you ID Phil or do you see the welcome screen above the chat?

DeborahH: yes I see welcome

BJB2: ok....scroll down on the welcome note to the dotted line...

BJB2: below the dotted line is Anyone can see and join this group...yes?

DeborahH: ok

DeborahH: ok

BJB2: the line under that is This is the group room for BirdSleuth Inquiry...click on the green i in that sentence

BJB2: you will then see the group ID page above this chat

BJB2: select Join this group and you're in!

DeborahH: thank you

BJB2: you're welcome!

BJB2: to get back to the welcome screen click on Room View at the top of the screen

BJB2: this group will automatically be added to your drop down favorite places menu in the top right next to the Go! button

BJB2 goes to get some dinner.

BJB2: Thanks, Phil.

DeborahH: good night - this was great!

DeborahH left the room.

PhilK: I'll read the transcript and get back to you with any more questions I might have.