

"...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." (Daniel 12:4)

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A Glimpse Into The Future

Imagine a classroom that has no chalkboard or dry-erase-boards. In this classroom you have an electronic board where the teacher can either choose to write or use the voice-activated program on his or her laptop to make notes on the board.

Information can be transferred or uploaded from the teacher's laptop or from a student to the class' mainframe. Each student has a desk fully equipped with a Pentium IV processor, pop-up flat screen monitor, slide-out keyboard, mouse and 3/4 inch floppy drive. All systems are networked to the class' mainframe, which has a DVD and VCR connected to it. The teacher may choose to illustrate with the use of the DVD/VCR player, which will appear on the electronic board and on each student's individual screen.

The main server is a powerful desktop computer that is equipped to run two operating systems, Linux and Windows XP. All program files are accessed on the secondary slave drive that contains application software such as Microsoft Office 2000, WordPerfect Office 2000, and other programs pertaining to content areas.

In this classroom there are two types of books, the text and the electronic book. Information can be downloaded to the electronic book from the internet, intranet or the teacher's computer. All information can be replaced in the electronic book.

This classroom is found within a school where there are twelve other classrooms designed in similar fashion with intranet and high speed internet access. All classrooms, stairways, and hallways are equipped with micro cameras, two-way PA system, and telephones operated only by fingerprint security passes. The school is equipped to service online students or students linked to local home and school association. Every two years the school upgrades its systems and retrain all faculty in order to keep up to date with current trends. With this technology the possibilities are endless.

Reality Check

The above scenario is workable but expensive. It would cost between \$60,000 to \$150,000 to setup such a classroom depending on whether or not you use wireless networking for each student using school-owned laptops. The technological world and the industrial world are fully united. Most offices in North America have computers that connect to the Internet and use the latest technology. In many provinces and states the educational standards are barely competing with the technological boom. Ideally, our educational institution should be at the cutting edge of the boom, but in many cases it finds itself lagging behind. Many private schools, especially those not funded by the government, are struggling to find funds. Looking back in history we see that at the crest of most technological advancement, the educational institution was the inventor or originator of such technologies. In this computer-automated age educational institutions generally wait to see the trends in the industrial sectors in order to modify

their programs and prepare students to meet the necessary demands.

There was a time when all technological advancement originated in religious institutions. The church was the leading authority in education, and thus all philosophies and ideas filtered through it. Gradually, the state or government gained control of the educational system. The technological advancement of the past hundred years has revolutionized the perception of Christian education. The little one room school can have access to as much information through the Internet as the typical school with complete facilities.

How is present technology employed in the Seventh-day Adventist schools across our nation, North America and other continents? We are aware of the technological trends in the world outside of our school, but is our institution implementing them in its education and religious system?

In Grade VII Moral and Religious Education classes, students are taught about Tindale, the printing press, and the translation of the Bible into the English language. We see the technological impact on the day; it affected not only the church but the school system as well. As technology increases, knowledge increases proportionately and vice versa.

As good as technology is, it can be used for bad purposes. Technology, if controlled, can be a blessing to all institutions. We need to understand that technology will fail at times, human effort will come to nought, and even some of the best schools in the land will sink. Nevertheless, we have an eternal hope.

"The wreck, eroded with rust, rotted in an empty, unkempt field, its tail fins testified to the glory of another era. Stripped by hoodlums who, if caught in their act, would have been out of jail long ago, the car was so old that even the birds had abandoned it. The only signs of life near it were a prickly bush that had grown up through a hole in the bottom of the trunk and a few scattered weeds that had circled the wreck like some sort of macabre garden. The car's front bumper carried a sticker with a message that, though worn with age, faded and eroded by the weather, could still be seen, and it said-"Jesus is coming soon!""

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Whether we are trying to catch up or we are on board the high-speed technology train, let us not lose sight of our higher calling to prepare minds not just for here and now but also for eternity.