

SCHOOLROOMS SEARCHLIGHT

SCHOOLROOMS

IN BRIEF:

SchoolRooms and INFOhio were recently featured in the *School Library Journal*. Thanks to INFOhio Executive Director Theresa M. Fredericka for giving a fantastic interview! View the article at: <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6617677.html?industryid=47078>.

New Year, New Content for SchoolRooms!



Starting in February, be sure to check out the new content in each level of SirsiDynix SchoolRooms! Every other month, new educational material is added to our product, including Web links corresponding with nationwide academic standards, engaging slideshows, fun and games and more! Also look for the new SchoolRooms Wiki, which is now available to all customers. This marketing and communications tool will help everyone involved with SchoolRooms better understand and promote the product. See page 2 for more.

Also check out the helpful hints on page 3 for tips on getting the most out of SchoolRooms!

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FROM THE SCHOOLROOMS VP:

Contributions Are Crucial to Product Success

To all our friends, partners, and contributors:

As the new Vice President of SchoolRooms, I wish to thank you for the ideas and suggestions you have contributed for the development of this wonderful product.

Many thousands of children are already benefiting from the diligent efforts provided by you over the past several months. I want you to know that I am very grateful for your contributions and your continued support.

SirsiDynix is truly

committed to bringing this product to market and reaching thousands of children, parents, and educators who can truly benefit from its strengths. We value this partnership with the education sector and want to see it succeed over the long term.

We are currently designing a training and certification program for all School-



Adrian R. Escalante
SchoolRooms VP

Rooms users. This will provide an opportunity for many of you to become certified and perhaps deliver informational and certification sessions in your areas. Please let me know if you would like to participate in the design

phase of this project. I can be reached via email at adrian.escalante@sirsidynix.com or by phone at 800.288.8020, ext. 5525.

Staying Connected

NEW SCHOOLROOMS WIKI TO PROVIDE CONTENT, COMMUNICATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS

By Anthony Shamoun

SchoolRooms Sales Consultant



SirsiDynix and the SchoolRooms team are proud to announce the release of the SchoolRooms Marketing Wiki (<http://schoolrooms.pbwiki.com>). The site will house various SchoolRooms-related materials, everything from flyers, bookmarks, and PowerPoints to archived demonstrations and training materials that will be available for use by customers.

Being a Wiki, it is also meant as a place for SchoolRooms clients to store and share any SchoolRooms materials that they have created. The Wiki format allows for a forum of collaboration and also a way to quickly disseminate new resources.

SirsiDynix will continue to upload SchoolRooms support materials to

the site and users are encouraged to visit often as the materials will be updated regularly.

The Wiki is available for anyone to view and download materials. If you would like to upload materials or edit the Wiki, please email Anthony Shamoun or request access through the site.

The front page also includes a link for those unfamiliar with how to use a Wiki.



ON THE WEB:

<http://schoolrooms.pbwiki.com>

SirsiDynix will continue to look for new and innovative ways to support our clients and end users. Contact Anthony Shamoun via email at anthony.shamoun@sirsidyndix.com or 1-800-288-8020, ext. 5136 with any questions, comments, or new ideas that you may have.

SchoolRooms Advisory Board Holds Second Meeting

By Abby Dunham

SchoolRooms Channel Manager

The second meeting of the SchoolRooms Advisory Board took place in St. Louis, MO, Nov. 12 - 13, 2008. New key SchoolRooms staff members from SirsiDynix had the opportunity to meet with SchoolRooms customers with the goal of "Taking SchoolRooms to the Next Level."

Channel Manager Abby Dunham updated the panel on the summer and fall activities of the SchoolRooms Content Team. The panel got a look at the future of SchoolRooms and work from a product development perspective from Product Strategy Director Jared Oates.

On day two, SchoolRooms Development Director Marsha Dennis discussed a

possible expanded SchoolRooms taxonomy and curriculum mapping.

Sales Consultant Anthony Shamoun introduced impressive new SchoolRooms sales initiatives for the present and future.

Finally, SchoolRooms Vice President Adrian Escalante unveiled a product marketing strategy for the present and future and led a discussion about effective means of product evaluation. SchoolRooms customers shared the fantastic, fun marketing materials that they have created for their own users.

The SchoolRooms Staff enjoyed and appreciated their time visiting and exchanging ideas with customers. The future of SchoolRooms has never looked brighter!

Showing Off Our SCHOOLROOMS

SchoolRooms will be at the following trade shows in 2009:

ALA Midwinter Meeting—Denver, CO—Jan. 23-26

eTech Ohio—Columbus, OH—Feb. 2-4

Texas Computer Education Association—Austin, TX—Feb. 3-6

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development—Orlando, FL—March 14-16

National School Boards Association Annual Conference—San Diego, CA—Apr. 4-7

ALA Annual Conference—Chicago, IL—July 11-14





SCHOOLROOMS HELPFUL HINTS

SirsiDynix SchoolRooms is such a vast and varied product, you may not be aware of everything it has to offer! Try out the following helpful hints to help your students get the most out of their learning experience.

SEARCH TIP

If your SchoolRooms Internet search doesn't yield the expected results, try re-phrasing the search topics. For example, if seeking information on a specific author, say Hawthorne, and few results are listed, search "Romanticism" or "Romantic Literature" instead. Keep trying, because if the topic is part of an academic standard, it will be in the product. On the other hand, topics that are not included in a state's standards, "bow hunting," for example, will most likely not be found in SchoolRooms.

SLIDESHOWS

Did you know that SchoolRooms features slideshows in each level? They are found in the lobbies, main levels, and lower levels. Use the "next" and "previous" buttons to navigate your way through the slideshows. Most slides include a link for further information.

FINDING RESEARCH TOPICS

Do your students have trouble finding topics for research assignments? Tell them to click through SchoolRooms. The Earth Science Room might inspire them to research the

history of the Richter Scale. A student's visit to her grade level's Literature Room might help her find a book that looks intriguing enough to read and report on.

BEST OF WEB

Did you know that SchoolRooms has hand-picked the very best Web sites out there for you and your students to use in your study and research?

Simply type in your search term in the box at the top of the page and select the "Best of Web" drop-down option and browse through the best the Internet has to offer.

STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

Have students submit stories of how they used SchoolRooms on a project, or something cool they learned while using the portal – then post the stories in SchoolRooms.

SCAVENGER HUNTS

Send students on a hunt through different Rooms in search of information like "the names of two rivers in Africa" or "the name of our fifth President." This could be a really fun activity, especially for indoor recess.

USE SMARTBOARDS

Teachers with smartboards can use SchoolRooms to find animations, videos, Web sites and other interactive resources to incorporate into lesson plans and teaching materials. Content in SchoolRooms is linked to games and other resources that teachers can easily use to enhance their lessons.

INSPIRING LESSON PLANS

Any module in SchoolRooms can inspire a great lesson plan. For example, a "Did You Know" module on the original inspiration for abstract art could lead to a lesson plan on the origins of various artistic movements.

Or a "Where's That?" module about Henry David Thoreau and *Walden Pond* could inspire a lesson plan about how writers' physical surroundings affect their writing. The possibilities are endless!

SCHOOLROOMS

Meet Your SchoolRooms Team

NEW ADDITIONS CHANGE THE FACE OF SCHOOLROOMS STAFF

SchoolRooms contains 70+ Rooms of educational content and thousands of Web links that are updated bimonthly for customers across the country. Such a vast project takes a group of dedicated employees, and SirsiDynix has gathered a SchoolRooms team with diverse backgrounds and a fierce dedication to SchoolRooms to create a product that meets our customers' high standards month after month, year after year.

VP: ADRIAN ESCALANTE

Adrian Escalante joined the SchoolRooms team in October 2008 as Vice President. His main duties are product improvement and market expansion, and he has already hit the ground running with new marketing initiatives and scheduled trade show appearances. He sees a bright future for the SchoolRooms product and its customers.

"I see hundreds of schools and thousands of educational professionals benefiting from this tremendous product," he said. "It's a great resource for students, parents, teachers, and librarians."

Prior to joining SirsiDynix, Adrian was President and CEO of Daily Dose Learning Systems, a training and



The Huntsville SchoolRooms team includes: (top row, L-R) Abby Dunham, Jennifer Griffin, Marsha Dennis, Sonia Brown, (bottom row, L-R) Amanda Barrett and Emily Howard

consulting firm for multicultural and multilingual organizations. He is also the founder of the Mali Rising Foundation, a non-profit organization building schools in West Africa.

DIRECTOR: MARSHA DENNIS

SchoolRooms Development Director Marsha Dennis joined the team in August 2008. She is responsible for, among other things, researching and analyzing market requirements, ensuring alignment of SchoolRooms content with state standards and benchmarks, and

overseeing SchoolRooms content to ensure quality, currency, and integrity. Dennis is excited about the opportunity to work with a product like SchoolRooms.

"Who wouldn't want to go to work every day and have the opportunity to improve the quality of education for others?" she said. "Working with SchoolRooms transcends the word 'job.' Every night I drive home with a smile on my face, realizing how lucky I am."

(See **TEAM**, p. 5)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

NOTHING ENDURES BUT CHANGE

By Marsha Dennis

SchoolRooms Development Director

Change. Progress. These words create apprehension for some, excitement in others. Throughout the progression to SchoolRooms 3.0, we all expect changes. Specifically, most of us expect that this wonderfully educational product will only improve in the process. In that respect, we are all agreed. Yet some of us do fear change. "Ay," as Hamlet proclaims, "there's the rub."

The search function for the current edition of SchoolRooms must keep up with the improved capabilities of tech-

nology. The product must search its own content, and every search will still produce wholly relevant results, regardless of where in the product the search is conducted. These changes are non-negotiable. Pactum Factum.

Many feel that the delineated boxes into which search results are currently organized present a unique vision to the K-12 community. Others feel that placing results into a more Google-like, centrally framed format will improve the product. Two differing opinions—one product. Yet, vast possibilities exist to find mid-ground—a lot of leeway on both

sides. An agreement will surface, and with it, increased pride for SchoolRooms' already respected searching abilities.

In some opinions, the look and feel of SchoolRooms needs a makeover as well—a "what not to wear" conversion for portals. Others, however, prefer the academic overture and consistency created by the current skin. Finding a middle ground should be fairly simple here—something between glitz and a Spartan demeanor, which allows for quite a bit of leeway. A happy medium definitely exists.

(See **DIRECTOR'S CORNER**, p. 5)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER
Continued from page 4

We all know that the taxonomy will change with the new SchoolRooms version. Everyone agrees that we must stay abreast of evolving curriculum. Everyone agrees that we must focus on the eventual searching of our product via standards and benchmarks—searching that should begin with the creation of an expanded taxonomy, one that correlates with the objectives of all 50 states.

The debate lies in how the new taxonomy will be decided. Some feel that the professionals at SchoolRooms are adequately educated for the task. Others feel that we must again have a teacher boot camp with committees assigned to each content area. Again, somewhere in the center lies the answer. The taxonomy will evolve regardless.

Change will happen to SchoolRooms with 3.0. Progress will occur—no doubt and very welcome. SchoolRooms is a dynamic product; this portal is not, nor will it ever be, static and lifeless. The ability to create personal rooms to share with other users will be phenomenal. The product's capability for interaction will increase diametrically. We celebrate such progress. In fact, we rejoice in all of the coming changes—we just have differing reservations. Such uncertainties will change as well. Mahatma Gandhi believed that differing opinions was an indication of beneficial progress. I agree.

TEAM—Continued from page 4

SALES CONSULTANT: ANTHONY SHAMOUN

Sales Consultant Anthony Shamoun joined the SchoolRooms team in August of 2008 and has been working hard ever since to spread the word to schools and libraries across the country of the product's benefits, which he has experienced firsthand with his own children.

"As a parent, I have seen my own children go to SchoolRooms looking for information on one particular subject, only to start clicking around when they were done and learn about additional subjects," he said.

NEW CHANNEL MANAGERS: EMILY HOWARD AND AMANDA BARRETT

Emily Howard made the transition from newspaper editor to SchoolRooms Channel Manager in July of 2008. As the mother of a 3-year-old son and another on the way, Howard said the opportunity to use her skills and experience on an educational product like SchoolRooms was a perfect fit.

"I love the fact that my kids will benefit from the work I'm doing," she said.

Associate Channel Manager Amanda Barrett graduated from the University of South Alabama in May 2008 with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. She enjoys creating content and learning new facts every day.

"The only thing I don't like about the product is that it wasn't available to me when I was in school," Barrett said.

THE VETERANS: ABBY DUNHAM, JENNIFER GRIFFIN, SONIA BROWN

Abby Dunham has been a part of SchoolRooms since its early days in 2006.

She uses her expertise in writing, editing and Web research to provide great content to customers each month.

"I love how easy SchoolRooms is to use. SchoolRooms is almost deceptively simple; there is so much valuable information in each Room of the product!" she said.

Jennifer Griffin, who has also been on board since 2006, manages SchoolRooms images and other media content.

"I love working on a product that helps children develop a love of learning," she said. "There is so much quality educational content on the Web, and I love that SchoolRooms connects students to the best that the Web has to offer."

Sonia Brown came to SchoolRooms from SirsiDynix Client Care in February 2008. She manages the SchoolRooms Advisory and Maintenance Committee, among other duties.

"I am an educator, librarian and parent so this job combines all my previous experience," Brown said.

THE BACKBONE: SAM TEAM AND CONTRACTORS

The SchoolRooms Advisory and Maintenance Committee are a group of teachers and librarians that provide high-quality educational Web links for the SchoolRooms product each month as well as other beneficial input.

Their participation with the product greatly adds to its credibility and value.

SchoolRooms also employs a group of contractors whose duty each month is to make sure all content updates are completed.

"We couldn't do what we do without our contractors," said Dunham, who manages the group.

**SCHOOLROOMS
SEARCHLIGHT**

Editor: Emily Howard

Additional content provided by:

- Adrian Escalante, SchoolRooms Vice President
- Anthony Shamoun, SchoolRooms Sales Consultant
- Marsha Dennis, SchoolRooms Development Director
- The SirsiDynix Huntsville SchoolRooms Content Team

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Submit a Tip

Do you have an idea you would like to submit that is related to integrating SchoolRooms or technology into the classroom? Send your tips and ideas for possible inclusion in a future newsletter!