

# CAMP INTERNET'S "EXPLORE THE CALIFORNIA CHANNEL ISLANDS"<sup>1</sup>

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"Explore the Channel Islands" is an online multimedia learning program produced by Camp Internet for the RAIN Network as a Public Internet Broadcasting project. The Camp's Channel Islands program is currently being accessed by a pilot group of thirty-three 4th to 12th grade California classrooms September 1998 to June 1999. This educational program is an innovative Internet-based curriculum pilot project managed by RAIN's Camp Internet, under Federal and State Technology Literacy and Distance Learning funding (1998 to 2002). In its first pilot year, the Camp Internet program has been invited into the Smithsonian Innovation Network, was nominated by Steve Jobs of Apple Computer for a Computerworld Smithsonian Award, and will be working with National Geographic Society scientists on the Sustainable Sea Expedition. The program is one of the first K-12 education projects to address a study of all eight of the California Channel Islands and presents a multi-disciplinary study balancing humanities and science topics.

The 33 southern California classrooms were selected to represent both urban and rural distance learning environments who would not otherwise have access to the subject materials, nor to the expert mentors the Camp brings to their classroom via the Internet. The classrooms bring their students online at least one day per week for the full school year to enter into immersive electronic learning environments that survey the history, biology, geology, geography, marine studies, meteorology, astronomy, and paleontology of the region. Teachers are reporting a consistent increase in student motivation in a multiple of subjects presented by the Camp, and have been bringing parents and grandparents into the technology literacy training process during Camp-sponsored Community Nights at the schools.

As a project focused on the delivery of valuable content, and the improvement of the wider learning environment, one of the most important features of this technology literacy project is a human feature. Students and teachers are benefitting by having direct contact with expert scientists and historians who serve as Camp Trail Guides, and who offering their expertise and enthusiasm for the protection of this fragile ecosystem. These online mentors are

sharing knowledge in their field of expertise, are sharing their enthusiasm for their subject matter, and are serving as role models that encourage the students to pursue higher education and professional career choices. And in return, these on-line mentors are receiving an opportunity to see their chosen career through the awed eyes of a young student, and are reporting that they greatly enjoy the thought-provoking questions the students are asking. Every one of the Trail Guides has offered to return for more contact with the students.

Technology innovations that are being tested and implemented include: live online broadcasts from the Channel Islands back into the classrooms, live broadcasts from relevant mainland historical sites into the classrooms, interactive chat rooms hosted by the featured Trail Guides, video and audio recordings on local history topics, virtual field trips with video recordings of participating agency facilities and interviews with scientists, historians and curators, plus parent involvement components, and digital access to collections not normally available to the public. As a conclusion to the 1998-1999 Camp program, the students and teachers will be taken out to several of the Channel Islands for full day and two-day technology, history, and science expeditions, and will then report back to classrooms worldwide regarding their findings. The goals of the program is to move from its 1998-1999 pilot year into a formalized program available annually to classrooms around the world.

Camp Internet is the first web-based learning environment in the world to incorporate this range of interactive technology features used to create a knowledge or information clearinghouse for a Consortium of over 40 State, Federal and Private Agencies. The Camp is a bridge between these valuable agency resources and the public, who are the end users of the resources. Specific target audiences are: classroom, after school, museum, home, and library settings. As a result of this effective consortium creation, and groundbreaking role as a bridge between agency and public participants, the Camp director has been invited to present papers on multi-agency information sharing at conferences in the United States, Europe, and Australia, including the

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National Research Council, the International Internet Society, the National Rural Telecommunications Conference, and the International Telecommunications Consortium.

This project is an opportunity to establish a standardized application for Internet technology as an integrated feature of the twenty-first century classroom. Teachers attended pre-session in service training in Santa Barbara, in August of 1998, and receive staff development support year-round through Camp Counselors who work directly in the classrooms, and who are available online for technical and program support. Parent involvement is encouraged through home and public library computer access in conjunction with the California State Library InfoPeople Program, and by invitation to Camp Community Nights at the schools (which for some parents has been the first time they have ever touched a computer). The program is aimed at developing a corps of community stakeholders in each region who recognize the value of learning technology, and who, as representatives from government, industry, families and education, will work together to continue introducing new learning technologies into their communities. The goal of the overall program is to establish a foundation for distance learning technology to become a component of the lifelong learning process for learners of all ages in the participating communities.

The Camp's emphasis on the California Channel Island region affords an opportunity to encourage interagency information sharing for the benefit of the public. Presenting these shared information resources to the public will promote local and regional education goals of participating agencies, and also work to increase overall public awareness of the important issues facing the California Channel Islands as a national treasure. Spokespersons from science and environmental organizations take part in live Internet based chat sessions with classrooms and are interviewed by our video team with materials made available for online viewing in both streaming video and audio formats. Components of the Camp Internet web include a Fisheries Habitat web site sponsored by the American Oceans Campaign and a special partnership program in Santa Barbara, California providing sponsorship for six classrooms through the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

RAIN and Camp Internet's distance learning agency partners and participants include:  
 California Dept. of Education-Technology Literacy Program  
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Utility Service  
 University of California Cooperative Extension  
 4-H Youth Development Program  
 U.S. Dept. of Defense, DLA  
 National Science Foundation  
 National Research Council  
 International Internet Society

Marine Educators Regional Alliance  
 Sun Microsystems  
 Rockwell International  
 GTE  
 Cox Communications  
 Wells Fargo Bank  
 Santa Barbara Bank and Trust  
 Santa Barbara County Job Training Network  
 Landon Pediatric Foundation  
 National Geographic Society-  
     Sustainable Seas Expedition  
 Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
 Channel Island National Park  
 California State Parks  
 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History  
 Santa Barbara Historical Society and Museum  
 University of California, Santa Cruz  
 Santa Catalina Island Conservancy  
 Catalina Island Museum  
 American Rock Art and Research Association  
 Sunnyside Sea Farms  
 Jean Michele Cousteau Institute  
 Black Gold Library Cooperative  
 Dana School, San Luis Obispo  
 Round Valley Elementary School, Inyo  
 San Bernardino County Schools:  
     Oro Grande, TLC/LEA  
 North Verdemon- Smithsonian Award nominee  
     Maple  
     Mt. Baldy  
     Helendale  
     Baker  
     Curtis Middle  
     Oaks Middle  
     Highland Pacific  
     Fontana  
     Park View  
     Upland Community  
     Ramona Junior High  
     Lake Arrowhead  
 Riverside County Schools:  
     Good Hope  
     Valley View  
 Santa Barbara County Schools:  
     Cuyama  
     Montecito  
     Goleta Valley  
     Cabrillo High  
     Santa Barbara High  
     Guadalupe  
     Casmalia  
     Laguna Blanca