



# IDLA NEWS

IOWA DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION'S  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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 [idla.org](http://idla.org)

## Annual Conference Date Set! IACON 2009

Save the date for the IACON conference, April 17, 2009 in Altoona, Iowa at the Adventureland Inn. This conference, like past years, is a joint effort between the Iowa Distance Learning Association (IDLA) and Iowa Association for Communication Technology (IACT). The theme, From Traditions to Possibilities, is carried on from last year, and the themes for the breakout sessions include:

- Distance classroom technology/gadgets
- Distance learning program evaluation
- Social utilities/creating community online

- Blended classrooms/learning

In addition, the opening keynote speaker is Dr. Kristen Betts from Drexel University in Philadelphia. To learn more about Dr. Betts, visit the IDLA Web site, [www.idla.org](http://www.idla.org) where her biography is posted. Additionally, the Call for Proposals is also posted on the Web site.

We hope you will join us at IACON 2009 this year! If you cannot, we would urge you to renew your membership for the 2009 year for IDLA. This newsletter is one of the new quarterly benefits for members, as well as planned online conferences throughout the year.

### SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT: IACON Conference 2009

WHERE: Altoona, Iowa  
Adventureland Inn

WHY: To gain great information about distance learning, or present your work!

Get excited for  
*i@con 2009!*

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## Letter from the 2009 President, Pat McGinty

Dear Potential and Current Members,

It is indeed a great time to be involved with distance learning and training. The Iowa Distance Learning Association is a group of professionals committed to innovation, exploration and excellence in education and training delivery. Our goal is to bring together professionals in distance learning areas from education, corporate training, gov-

ernment and military organizations to share our experience, knowledge, and expertise to better serve lifelong learners.

The 2009 Iowa Connections Conference (IACON) promises to be a terrific venue with 2 keynote addresses and break out workshops focused on Blended Classrooms, Distance Learning Technology, Social Utilities and much more. We hope you will plan to join us

for this lively exchange as we explore together the exciting field of Distance Learning. We welcome your membership and renewal and look forward to seeing you at the conference in April.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or a board member with your questions and comments.

All the best,

Patrick McGinty, 08-09 President

*The Iowa Distance Learning Association is a non-profit association formed to promote the development and application of distance learning to education and training. Our goal is to bring together professionals in distance learning areas from education, corporate training, government and military organizations to share our experience, knowledge, and expertise to better serve lifelong learners. Please visit our Web site at [www.idla.org](http://www.idla.org) for more information.*



## Meet a Board Member...Susan Fey

Susan Fey comes to IDLA from Iowa State University, where she is a program coordinator for ISU Design West, a satellite design studio housed in Sioux City Iowa, created by the ISU College of Design.

Additionally, she works for the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development as a program coordinator for the Community Development On-line Master's Program, a program of the Great Plains IDEA. Five universities partner to offer the

degree program, including Iowa State University, Kansas State University, North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University, and the University of Nebraska. The program came about in 2004 through a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant.

Susan has a B.A. in Secondary Education and English and an M.A. in English. She has presented at numerous distance education conferences about her work on the online master's program. She has published many journal articles, and co-authored one

book, *Rural Communities, Legacy and Change*, 2nd Edition.

Outside of work, Susan enjoys writing and editing. In fact, she is the editor of *Siouxland Magazine*, a local lifestyle magazine for the Sioux City tri-state area. She also enjoys working out, reading, and spending quality time with her husband Beau and their three-year-old son, Paulsen.

Her most recent accomplishment has been presenting at the Sloan-C Conference in Orlando via Wimba and Second Life.

## USDLA News: Annual Conference 2009

The annual conference for the United States Distance Learning Association will be held on April 26-29, 2009 in St. Louis, Missouri at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark. As stated on [www.usdla.org](http://www.usdla.org), "This conference is an opportunity to share ideas, learn about distance learning programs and products, and gain a better understanding of the field."

Early bird registration is open until December 31, 2008 and regular registration runs

until February 28. Late registration is open until April 26, 2009.

The USDLA Web site offers many resources for people working in distance education, as well as information about scholarships and awards. IDLA was the first state chapter for USDLA, and we are proud to be a strong state chapter!



## Social Utilities: Twitter, Facebook, Ning, MySpace, Huh?

Social utilities are becoming more and more prevalent in our lives—personal and work. It seems that more and more of them are popping up, and are unique ways to follow what our friends, co-workers, and fellow students are doing. Each one works in different ways, with Facebook allowing you to join mob wars and send online gifts to your friends, as well as add pieces of flare to your page. Ning is more of an edu-

cational utility for groups to meet with, and does not have near the amount of extras that might get in the way at times when trying to work inside the utility.

Twitter offers you a way to track those you are connected with, as well as learn more about the people in your life that you may not know so well. You can provide as much or as little information about yourself

as you want, if you are concerned with privacy.

If you have never tried any of these utilities, it is worth a look. And, it is a great way for your class or program to connect online and learn more about one another, especially if they have never met face-to-face. (Twitter has a fun video explaining how it works too! Check it out at [twitter.com](http://twitter.com)).