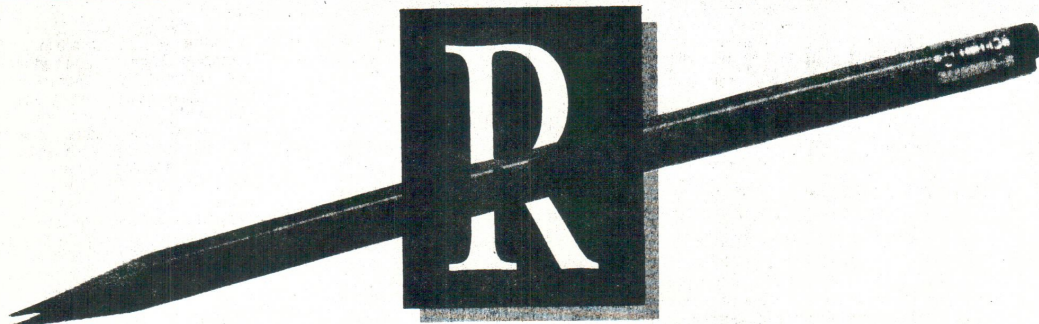


## THE RESOURCE CENTER



By MARGARET MORABITO

Two years ago I reported on the Electronic University, a unique on-line network that offers the chance to earn a college degree. At that time, it was young, and although it offered great potential for learning, there were problems to be overcome. The software was slow and was in need of strong technical support, and the network didn't have the support of major universities across the nation.

Now I'm pleased to report on improvements in TeleLearning's Electronic University. The network has matured in several ways and today is a key force in providing higher education to the adult working person.

### *In the Beginning*

TeleLearning, Inc., from San Francisco, California, opened the Electronic University Network (EUN) three years ago. Originally, the network catered only to Commodore 64 owners, a credit to the millions of home users who bought this computer. As the concept of on-line learning gathered steam, however, the demand from other computerists grew and resulted in EUN's opening its doors to Apple and IBM users, too.

While the original concept was to enroll the millions of home computerists in personal enrichment courses, many students of EUN today are corporate employees who want to earn a college degree. EUN has about 5000 students who work for corporations and have their education financed through tuition reimbursement options.

Students are drawn to the network because it lets them go to college with-

*The Electronic University has come of age, providing on-line opportunities to earn college credits and degrees.*

out disrupting their home and work life through travel to attend scheduled classes. Also, on-line learning is self-paced and individualized, with students corresponding directly with their instructors through electronic mail.

### *A Communications Channel*

The goal of the Electronic University Network is to provide a channel through which students and professors can communicate. It's a communications network, not a university, but its staff is devoted to the advancement of education and is working to make student enrollment and participation both easy and motivating.

The EUN staff provides student counseling on which courses to take, advice on how to procure books and other study materials, preparation of the paperwork needed by each college through which a student takes a course, and technical support if a student runs into computer problems. You can even order a computer and your books directly from EUN.

The professors come from universities and colleges across the nation. They create the courses, select the texts, and teach over the modem and phone lines via the network.

### *College Credit*

EUN provides courses for students

to take for college credit, as well as seminars and some other noncredit courses. Since most of the network's students are working adults who want to move up in their companies and need a college degree to do so, credit courses are in demand. Currently, you can earn Associate in Arts, Associate in Science in Management, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees through EUN.

Of course, you have to be enrolled in a college or university to receive credit for the courses you take. If you aren't already enrolled in a local college, you can enroll in one of three colleges that work directly with and offer degrees through EUN. These are JFK University in California, Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey and the State University of New York/Regents College.

These three colleges handle off-campus students specifically, allowing them to take courses and earn their degree credit from a variety of sources, including EUN. You can also get credit from these institutions for prior course work at other colleges, work experience, CLEP (College Level Examination Program) tests and correspondence courses.

There are three ways to use the credits earned through EUN. You can take courses without actually working toward a degree; you can study in an associate's, bachelor's, master's or certificate program; or you can accumulate credits from on-line courses and transfer them to a local college where you're enrolled.

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## The Resource Center

The 1986-87 EUN catalog lists 22 colleges and universities that offer courses through the network. Most of the courses are available through the three degree-granting universities I mentioned above, and others are offered on a limited basis from major campus-based universities. These schools award credit for their courses, and you can then transfer that credit toward your own degree program.

Some of the participating schools are Boston University, California State Polytechnical University, Eastern Michigan University, Ohio University, Penn State University, the University of Illinois, the University of Iowa and Washington State University.

### The Instruction

One of the most intriguing aspects of EUN is the way it implements on-line learning. For each course, you receive a textbook, a workbook and a TeleLearning course disk that includes lessons and assignments. EUN encourages its professors to pursue a multimedia approach, so some courses use other kinds of learning aids as well. For example, a student might view a videotape as part of a lesson. On-line time is kept to a minimum and is used only for uploading and downloading assignments and for electronic mail.

Typically, after registration in a course, a student logs onto EUN and receives a welcome message and the first assignment from the professor. Then he or she logs off and studies offline. This studying includes reading from the text, doing exercises in the workbook and preparing the homework assignment for uploading back to the instructor.

Except for going on-line, these are all traditional methods of instruction. EUN doesn't buck the educational system; it enhances it with the goal of offering the student a variety of proven methods for learning.

### New Software

Since December of 1986, TeleLearning has offered a new instructional delivery system, developed by Dr. James Milojkovic of Stanford University.

Called Protege, this software is a

significant improvement over that originally provided by TeleLearning. Protege is faster, due in part to data compression of lessons; it's crash-proof and easier to use; it provides more opportunity for communication with the instructor; it's menu-driven, with windows; and it makes help files always available.

The software relies on about 35 different templates that instructors can use to create course lessons. The student works within these templates as he or she proceeds through the course. In preparing homework, the student uses a variety of tools built into the templates that emulate word processor, database and communications functions.

### The Cost

You pay \$195 (\$125 if you work for a participating corporation) for a lifetime EUN membership, which can be used by any member of your family. This enrollment fee lets you communicate on the network, register for courses and access the counseling service and library.

Each course also carries its own tuition fee of \$60-\$80 per undergraduate credit and \$100-\$130 per graduate credit. In most cases, the course fee covers the course disks, the professor's time and telecommunications costs. Textbooks, study guides and other materials are additional. These costs are about the same as for a course at a private college.

If you're enrolling as a new student in a participating college or university, you must also pay that school's fees, which vary from school to

school. EUN counselors let you know what all your fees are at the time of registration.

Course counseling is included in your enrollment fee at EUN, and when you access the library, you pay only for the time you accrue in the database you use. The library consists of 60 databases and other services.

The Electronic University Network isn't for all students, but it does fill the growing need of our adult population for higher education without physically going back to school. For more information about this network, write to the Electronic University Network, 505 Beach St., San Francisco, CA 94133, or telephone 1-800-22LEARN. ■

*If you're using Commodore computers for educational purposes (at home or in school) and would like to share your experiences through The Resource Center, write me a letter detailing the equipment you're using, subject areas being taught, grade level or age of your students, software that you're using and any other information you feel like including.*

*Also, if you'd like to donate public domain educational programs to The Resource Center for sharing with other educators or parents, please send along a disk with a brief description of the program. Send correspondence and disks to:*

Margaret Morabito  
The Resource Center  
c/o RUN magazine  
80 Elm St.  
Peterborough, NH 03458

*You can also leave mail in my on-line mail boxes: CompuServe (70616,714) or QuantumLink (MARGM).*

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