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<http://ednews.org/articles/21117/1/An-Interview-with-Edward-Fields-and-Nicola-Soares-About-HotChalk/Page1.html>

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Published on 12/19/2007

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Edward Fields is Founder, Chairman & CEO of "HotChalk" and he has extensive experience in developing and marketing educational software and enterprise software solutions. Prior to founding the Company, Ed served as Senior Vice President of Marketing, Agile Software Corporation, President and CEO of ProductFactory, Inc. (a software firm he co-founded which was acquired by Agile in 2003) and Director of Interactive Publishing at The Learning Company. Ed has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications from the University of Denver and graduated in 1983.

Nicola Soares is Vice President of NBC News Educational Initiatives.

In this interview, they respond to questions about this intriguing new approach to learning.

1) It seems NBC and HotChalk are working together on a major learning project. Tell us about it.

The partnership NBC News and HotChalk are engaged in is unique and has the potential to dramatically impact the way students receive education. As you may know, over half of more than 21,000 teachers surveyed nationally by Project Tomorrow say that technology and the Internet have had the largest impact on their teaching and instructional support activities, helping them engage students in learning and allowing them to create richer, timelier lesson plans.

So together we're bringing into the classroom the powerful language of imagery -- on-demand access to what is widely recognized as "the first draft of history" -- exclusive access to NBC News' vault of over 70 years of TV news coverage, pre-TV film footage, and radio broadcasts. The content is continually updated; has been organized specifically for classroom instruction in collaboration with teachers, historians, textbook authors, and other experts; and includes over 6,000 news stories, mini-documentaries, interviews, text resources, and images addressing a wide range of topics designed for use across many content areas, including history, government, civics, English language, writing/composition, science, and more.

Now teachers can spend less time planning and looking for resources, and start accessing engaging curriculum that brings concepts to life, creates relevancy for students between concepts and real-world applications and issues, and identifies curriculum supplements that complement and drive home what they're teaching to this generation of wired kids.

The entire archive is available exclusively on the HotChalk Learning Environment, which is one of the fastest growing Internet education properties of the year.

2) When you say HotChalk's Learning Environment, what exactly do you mean?

HotChalk created a learning management system specifically for K-12 teachers focused on making their lives easier. It's

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now being used by over 130,000 teachers in more than 58,000 schools.

HotChalk provides a free, safe, easy-to-use vehicle for teachers to create customized assignments and lesson plans, locate and integrate curriculum materials, and manage assignments and grading. But it's also an interactive environment where teachers can share best practices, collaborate with each other, and communicate with their students and students' parents, who also have free access to this secure environment. It's the true essence of a Web 2.0 experience because each teacher's experience and the environment as a whole become richer, more dynamic, and better with each user's contribution.

And now, with the integration of the NBC News Archives on Demand, teachers can reach a new standard in bringing life-relevant learning to their classrooms by integrating the content into their lesson plans.

3) In a sense, this resource helps students learn about history by viewing past events. How detailed are the archives?

Very detailed - there are over 6,000 pieces of content on almost any academic topic imaginable studied in history, government, and English language courses in grade and high school. Science teachers will also find lots of content to demonstrate the concepts they're teaching.

Most important, though, is that the content is continually updated, so there's access to information on the most recent of topics. We've recently launched a revolutionary digital election resource on Decision '08, offering the latest, up-to-the-minute presidential election news through a video-on-demand user interface, allowing teachers to effortlessly customize their lesson plans with compelling and relevant content to bring the election process and political issues to life. This will be of particular value in enriching political understanding of 17 and 18 year old students, who are preparing to vote for the first time.

4) What does the Decision '08 resource offer?

The resource will be continually updated through Election Day next year.

Right now we've launched with:

a.. Ask NBC News - Students and teachers can send in questions about the candidates or the election process through HotChalk.com. One question will be answered via video by Tim Russert or other NBC news correspondents for the HotChalk community every week between now and the election.

a.. The Daily Trail - Up-to-the-minute breaking news and political analysis pulled daily from NBC News comprehensive political coverage, interviews, campaign speeches, and debates.

a.. Meet the Candidates - Full candidate profiles including candidacy announcements, major speeches, campaign trail news, and candidates' positions on major issues. Never-before-seen full and unedited "Meet the Press" interviews with the 2008 presidential candidates will also be available.

a.. Presidential Debates and Conventions - Clips and coverage from the primary and presidential debates and the nominating conventions.

a.. What's At Stake - In-depth look at the key issues of 2008, including foreign policy, education, immigration, healthcare, the economy, national security, and the environment. These special features will include sample lesson plans created by teachers for teachers.

a.. Campaigns Past - Historical footage from past presidential campaigns including archival speeches and interviews, debates, conventions, election night coverage, and inaugural and concession speeches. This section will also include historic campaign advertisements.

5) What is HotChalk's SwapShop?

SwapShop is a repository with more than 3,000 teacher-contributed lesson plans and other curricula resources created and

refined by teachers.

This interactive venue allows teachers to share lesson plans, assignments, and curricula. The SwapShop is a terrific complement to the HotChalk Teachers' Lounge where teachers can exchange ideas and gather ideas from peers on best practices.

6) What is HotChalk University?

Through a unique partnership with McGraw-Hill, HotChalk users have access to unlimited use of online, high-quality, video-based professional development courses designed to provide them with the skills they need to succeed in an ever-changing, challenging education environment. The programs cover a range of subjects -- reading, literacy, math, science, and social studies – and are convenient, easy to use, unique, and affordable ways of ensuring teachers receive the services they need to improve their professional lives.

Schools may purchase an annual subscription providing unlimited use of the entire McGraw-Hill Education online course list. Pricing is based on the number of teachers at the school building.

7) Who were some of the historians and textbook authors that NBC and HotChalk have worked with to complete this project?

NBC News worked with a number of prominent authors and historians from some of the most prestigious universities in the nation, including MIT,

Princeton, Columbia, and NYU. They include:

- a.. Alan Brinkley, Provost and Allan Nevins Professor of History, Columbia University
- b.. Barbara Winslow, Women's Studies Professor, Brooklyn College
- c.. Carol Berkin, History Professor, Baruch College
- d.. Caterina Pizzigoni, History Professor, Columbia University
- e.. Christopher Capozzola, History Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- f.. Craig Wilder, History Professor, Dartmouth College
- g.. Daniel Rodgers, History Professor, Princeton University
- h.. David Greenberg, History Professor, Rutgers University
- i.. David S. Reynolds, English Professor, City University of New York
- j.. Edward T. O'Donnell, History Professor, Holy Cross College
- k.. Eric Foner, History Professor, Columbia University
- l.. Esther Katz, History Professor and Editor of the Margaret Sanger Papers, New York University
- m.. Evan Haefeli, History Professor, Columbia University
- n.. John Steele Gordon, Author
- o.. Josh Brown, History Professor and Executive Director of the American Social History Project, City University of New York
- p.. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, History Professor, New York University

q.. Manning Marable, History Professor and Director of the Center for Contemporary Black History, Columbia University

r.. Maria Montoya, History Professor, New York University

s.. Matthew Warshauer, History Professor, Central Connecticut State University

t.. Sarah E. Chinn, English Professor, Hunter College

u.. Steven Hahn, History Professor, University of Pennsylvania

v.. Thomas Fleming, Author

8) How much would it cost a typical school system to integrate this system of learning into their curriculum?

One of the benefits of technology is the ability to customize the instructional approach for teachers. When a school building subscribes to NBC News Archives on Demand through HotChalk, the NBC News resources will be accessible for use by every teacher signed up for HotChalk and associated to that school. Teachers can then give access to their students through HotChalk's easy to use class roster system. All students and teachers in the school will have unlimited, anywhere-anytime access to the NBC News Archives on Demand for an entire year for one single low price: \$1,499 for an elementary or middle school, or \$1,999 for a high school. For most schools, that comes to around \$2.00 a student for unlimited access to materials for use across the curriculum.

Right now, schools can sign up and access the NBC News resources for free until January 31, 2008. At that time, the NBC News Archives on Demand will become an additional subscription service offered through the HotChalk Learning Environment. Use of the community and learning management resources through HotChalk.com will always be free for educators, students, and parents. For sales and subscription information, or to request a limited trial account after the January 31, 2008 deadline, contact HotChalk at sales@hotchalk.com or call toll free 888-468-2336 option 2.

9) Is there a website that tells us about HotChalk or this collaborative endeavor?

Teachers can find information online at: www.hotchalk.com/nbc.html. Registration is simple and free.

Published December 20, 2007