

# *From Data to Understanding: Navigating Informational Spaces in the Age of Overwhelm*

A day-long workshop for educators at all levels by

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## **Abstract:**

Does Web searching drive you crazy? Does it feel like the more information you have, the harder it is to find relevant nuggets? Does it amaze you that many of your students are proficient technology users at home, but seem challenged when they try to use the Web to conduct research on a school topic? Do you feel overwhelmed with meaningless data bombarding you from all directions?

Do some of your student “demonstrations of understanding” sometimes consist of nothing but haphazard regurgitations of whatever data they have collected?

Does it concern you that some technology-proficient students seem incapable of creating elegant multimedia projects that provide a clear pathway to their understanding of the topic being explored?

This workshop addresses these and other pragmatic concerns of all educators working in this age of data overwhelm. Through a combination of presentations and workshop activities, award-winning educator and futurist Dr. Thornburg shares practical strategies to help move from the world of highly impersonal data to the domain of personal understanding – *a journey we all want students to take as they study any subject at virtually any grade.*

*During this workshop you will:*

- Learn about the amazing power of mass media and the growth of raw data bombarding us from multiple sources (*hint: it's even worse than you think!*),
- Understand the perceptual modes of today's youth, and learn how to address these modes in everyday teaching (*how many screen names do YOU have?*),
- Explore student expectations of technology and the rise of the handheld-anywhere-anytime expectation for information access (*does your PDA have a built-in camera?*),
- Come to grips with the blessing and curse of hypertext and the World Wide Web (*are you happy getting 28,763 responses to every query?*),
- See at least one software tool that automatically provides context for any Web search, **no matter what topic is being explored** (*this one tool has already changed the way Dr. Thornburg's workshop participants use the Web!*)

- Explore the elements of data gathering and refinement, no matter the source or medium of expression (*Yes, books are media too!*),
- See tools to unleash the power of student-created media, especially through sounds, images and movies,
- Learn a strategy for helping students turn data into information, and explore the informational domain (*effective presentation strategies are shared!*),
- Learn tools and strategies to turn information into knowledge, and explore the nature of knowledge (*the power of storytelling applies at all ages*),
- Learn how to turn knowledge into understanding (*multimedia and metacognition, anyone?*) and explore how this might be an effective goal for education at the K-12 level, *AND*,
- Explore the topic of wisdom and its role in the K-12 curriculum.

*In addition to big-picture information and practical strategies, this workshop explores powerful tools that ease the path from data to understanding including:*

- Grokker
- Groove
- eZedia
- Inspiration
- Model-It
- *and more!*

*And that's not all...*

This workshop addresses, head-on, the bulk of the National Educational Technology Standards for educators developed by ISTE, and continuing-education credits can likely be arranged for participants if desired.

*Whew!*

In short, this dynamic workshop is chock-full of practical strategies presented in a highly contextual format, rather than a set of blind recipes that fall apart the first time you try to use them.

If you feel that the Internet has let you down as an educational resource, that multimedia often confuses, rather than enlightens, or that you need concrete help in finding ways to have youngsters use technology more effectively, this day-long workshop is just right for you.

*At the very least it will likely restore sanity to **your** life as a Web user!*

Demonstration copies of most of the software shown in this workshop will be provided along with extensive handouts.

**About the presenter:**

Dr. Thornburg has been named one of the top ten presenters in the field of educational technology, and was named one of 21 “Pioneers of Educational Technology” by ISTE. Through his keynote presentations and stellar workshops, David reaches many thousands of educators per year, worldwide. He is also a featured commentator on education for PBS and an advisor to the U. S. Federal Government on the humane uses of technology by children. He splits his time between homes in the United States and Brazil, and recently completed two global speaking tours in one year.

Through his numerous books and magazine articles, he has touched the lives of millions since entering the education field over twenty years ago. One participant in the *From Data to Understanding* workshop said, “I have listened to you for years, and this is your best work ever!” Even though he has a shelf full of awards for his contributions in the field of education, Dr. Thornburg gains his greatest pleasure from the “Aha!” moments that often occur in his work with educators.