

Aggielife

Professors, students glimpse future with e-mail assignments

By Nikki Hopkins
THE BATTALION

Some college courses might echo with an audible groan from students on the first day of class as the professor announces that every student will be assigned an e-mail address and all homework will be turned in through computers.

The use of computers as an educational tool has gone beyond word processing at Texas A&M and has become a means of communication between students and professors.

Dr. Richard Schaefer, an associate professor of journalism, said he teaches one class where he has attempted computerized homework.

Schaefer has his students send their assignments as well as any questions or comments about the class to him by e-mail.

"It is an incredible headache sometimes," he said. "But in the long run it really helps my students."

Schaefer said he spends up to four hours a day replying to students over the Internet.

Schaefer said he doesn't like his students to turn in homework on discs because of the risk of computer viruses.

"I call it safe communication," he said. "Using the computer as a communi-

cation tool between professors and students is becoming a trend for many departments on campus.

Visiting Professor Tom Parker in the architecture department said his department is installing 20 new computers this year that will enable students with an access identification to log on the system and communicate with their professors faster through e-mail.

Parker said using computers and discs instead of conventional hard copy assignments have advantages and disadvantages.

Parker said an advantage of computerized teaching is that professors can drop any information they want students to have on the server at any time, without the restrictions of office hours or class time.

"The disadvantage is that I can't take a drawing and write on it or make corrections," Parker said. "The images are so much smaller on the computer screen than on a large piece of drawing paper."

Dr. Douglas Starr, a journalism professor, said he edits papers on a computer because ink corrections made on his student's papers are a source of complaint.

"Red ink is more than they can emotionally handle," Starr said. "Once students get the hang of a computerized system they tend to like it better."

Starr said students are given a sys-

tem disc that allows them to access the department files server, or hard drive.

By using icons on the Macintosh screen, students can transfer a document into Starr's reserved file.

Starr said he saves all the student files on one disc and takes them home to grade.

"I can write more on what I want to tell the student," Starr said. "The beauty of this is no matter how many papers I have to grade, the last paper is always as legible as the first."

Starr said the days of writing out an assignment first, then typing it and turning it in are long gone.

"Professionally, time is your greatest enemy," Starr said. "On the computer you can almost type fast enough to keep up with your brain."

The next step in college computer teaching may be computer notebooks that students can take to class, carry in the car or use at home.

Today's college students may not use this technology in school, but college students five or 10 years from now might.

Paper and pencil may not be replaced, but the computer is definitely making an entrance into education that will change methods of learning and communication.

Brett Summers is a student consultant at the Remote Computing

Center help desk.

"A lot of professors want computerized homework but they don't give students good instructions," Summers said. "If the professors want students to use the technology, they need to get down here and use the systems themselves."

Summers said a lot of businesses say they use on the Internet because they want to be known as companies on the cutting edge of technology.

"In reality, they probably have one guy who knows how to use e-mail," he said. "So any student who has Internet skills is going to be very hireable."

Dr. David Paradise, associate professor of business analysis and research, said more e-mail addresses are appearing on business cards.

"A few years ago it was novel to see a fax number on a business card," Paradise said. "Now everybody has one."

Paradise said he thinks computerization is going to continue to grow in education without replacing the classroom.

"It's better for students to see a professor work out problems on the chalkboard than to simply see an answer materialize out of nowhere," Paradise said. "We want to use technology where it makes sense, not just for the sake of using technology."



Stew Milne / THE BATTALION
Dr. El-Shinnaway uses e-mail and a portable laptop for teaching her BANA 439 class.

Mourners crowd late Tejano singer's funeral following Friday's murder

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — With a 2-foot-high stack of white roses atop her casket, Tejano music queen Selena was remembered Monday for her laughter and inspiration to fellow Mexican-American musicians.

"She would want everyone to go on, including her fans," said Don Shelton, backup vocalists in her band, Selena y Los Dinos. "She would want everyone to treat every day like a new day and hold their heads up."

As services took place, prosecutors prepared formal murder charges against Yolanda Saldivar, a 32-year-old nurse from San Antonio who founded the Selena Fan Club and became a personal assistant to the emerging star.

Police accuse Saldivar of shooting the 23-year-old Grammy-winning singer minutes before Saldivar was about to be fired Friday amid embel-

zlement accusations.

Selena Quintanilla Perez's burial drew about 600 relatives, friends and music industry people to a grave beside a freshly planted mesquite tree in a new section of Seaside Memorial Park & Funeral Home.

Without words, Selena's brother, bassist and award-winning songwriter Abraham Quintanilla III, embraced her guitarist husband, Chris Perez, before the brief prayer service began.

Afterward, beginning with Selena's mother, Marcella Quintanilla, the mourners each placed a white rose on her casket until it was stacked more than 2 feet high.

"We've really appreciated that at a time like this everybody is ...," said one of Selena's uncles, Eddie Quintanilla, before pausing to switch into Spanish.

"Dar su apoyo," he finished, meaning "Giving their support."

More than 30,000 fans from across Texas streamed past Selena's casket during a public visitation Sunday, many of whom had journeyed from all across Texas upon hearing the news of Selena's slaying at a budget hotel where she had gone alone to meet Saldivar.

Accordian player Candyman Tovar, now with the Texas Latino group, remembered that two years ago he was nervous before a performance at the Tejano Music Awards by his former group "Culturas."

Selena arrived to soothe his jitters, he said. "She said: 'We're here together, brothers and sisters, and we'll take care of each other,'" Tovar said.

"We feel like we've had our hearts ripped out.

There's so much emptiness now," said Jimmy A. Gonzalez, the marketing director at Selena's Corpus Christi recording studio.

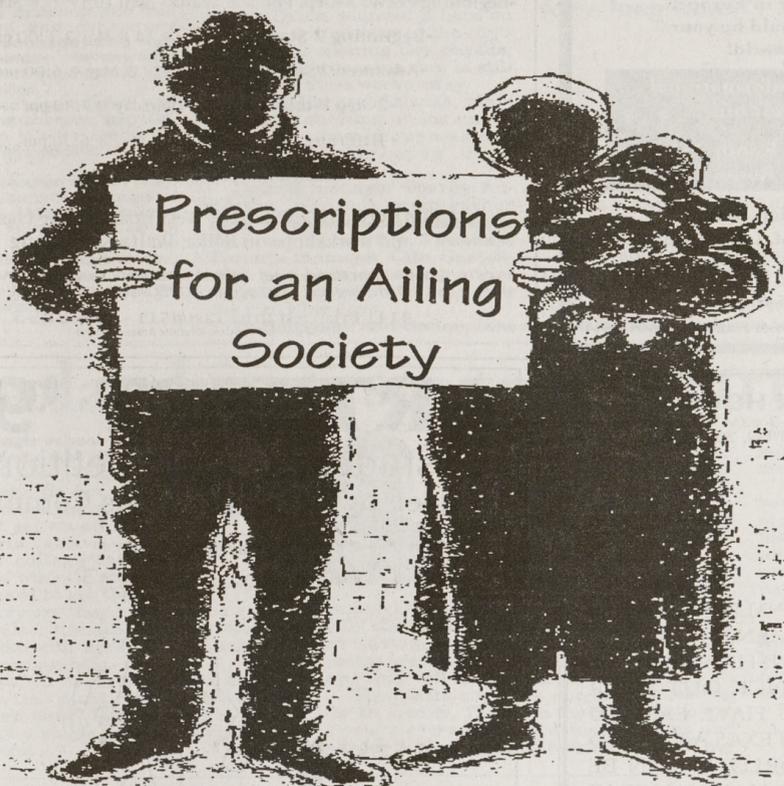
"There'll never be another Selena, I tell you that. She had everything in one package," he said, adding that one of her most memorable qualities was her laughter.

"That's all she was about — laughter. She never said anything derogatory about anybody," he said.

Tejano music — a blend of traditional Mexican styles with German polka — has been in Texas for decades, called "La Onda" (The Wave) and Tex-Mex at various times.

In recent years it became known as Tejano — meaning Texan. Selena's career, which began at age 9, propelled the sound well beyond this state, where one in four citizens is of Hispanic origin.

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