

CIDER is Born

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With significant male trepidation, I want to share a birth story with IRRODL readers. This month, after a seemingly endless gestation, the Canadian Institute for Distance Education Research (CIDER) was born. Like most births, this new presence began with a blissful consummation, when I accepted the Canada Research Chair in Distance education at Athabasca University. After a very short honeymoon, a couple of miscarriages, and a few lover's spats that marked the relationship between the Center for Distance Education and myself, we struggled to determine the type of protégée we wanted to birth. The within the womb (in house) development of the visible image and website took shape, which like all gestations, was marked by some lower backache, punctuated by a few graphic images that turned out to be false labour.

But in its time, <http://cider.athabascau.ca> emerged and although hardly full grown, it does have all its toes and fingers, so as proud parents we are pleased. So, even though CIDER is still in its earliest infancy, we would like to invite you a christening and viewing of the CIDER website.

CIDER is a portal or doorway to Canadian distance education research. We hope that researchers from across Canada - and around the world - will grow with CIDER as an entity born to share expertise and experiences, to find and recruit partners, collaborators, sponsors, and workers, and to enrich our research community. IRRODL is CIDER's peer reviewed dissemination vehicle. As always, IRRODL welcomes research reports and best practice from CIDER's cousins, uncles, and aunts from around the world. We plan to expand the CIDERPress as an online Open Access distribution tool for the dissemination of our research and teaching work. As CIDER matures, CIDERweb will expand with reviews of exemplar research projects, tools, and techniques, and grow to include robust databases of skills and interests of its extended family.

As I write, CIDER does not yet have its databases up-and-running to allow you to formally become a CIDER Fellow or CIDER Student, but that functionality will come - hopefully by mid November. In the meantime, any suggestions you may have that will aid in CIDER's growth and rigor, are most appreciated.

This Issue

This third issue of Volume 5 is rich with six main and research reports. It also has three articles of theological interest. Rogers and Howell overview article documents use of distance education by faith communities around the world. Palka's Technical Notes article looks more closely at the development of faith based community and its components at an American Christian seminary, and Doxsee overviews Marriage Mentorship a spiritual and community concern of all formal and informal religious organizations.

I would especially draw your attention to the article on copyright by Rory McGreal. As an Open Access journal, this issue strikes close to our heart, and is clearly an increasingly important issue for all distance educators. Regardless of where you live or work in our small world, times are demanding that we make a more proactive political effort to insure that the misuse and unreasonable extension of copyright law does not impair our capacity to develop and to deliver quality educational programming. This issue also contains three thoughtful book reviews (one of our own Open Access book) and six technical notes ranging from marriage and theology, to accessibility, to learning objects! We hope you enjoy the issue and email at least a reference or two to your colleagues!

Terry Anderson

