

SET on the NET
(Science Engineering and Technology on the Internet)

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Science, Engineering and Technology are as vital to our intellectual and cultural development (particularly our children's) as they are to our training to get along in the Modern World. Some efforts to redress the problems involved in the general Public awareness and understanding of science and Engineering (PAUSE) issues are being initiated via the Vega Science Trust (www.vega.org.uk), which aims to take advantage of the revolution in TV and Internet communications technology to improve matters. The best scientists and science communicators are being recorded and the programmes are being broadcast on BBC-TV and the Internet. Furthermore School/University outreach programmes are being developed and Vega is piloting ways in which members of the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) community can, as individuals and groups, make important contributions. Excerpts from SET programmes will be presented. These efforts present a perspective on SET which places the cultural factors in the foreground and focuses on the intrinsic charisma of science which is hidden from many. It is now crucial that the society in general and the scientific community in particular accept that serious problems are involved in communicating science and the Internet is set to play a major role. Before the invention of the printing press there was only one book in the west – the bible – and it was hand-written by monks. After the invention of the printing press book-writing and reading was democratized and this was truly the beginning of general education. In a similar way the birth of the Internet has democratized broadcasting – the broadcasting channels no longer control the dissemination of recorded material – individuals and groups of individuals can now do it themselves, and so the birth of the Internet has enabled broadcasting (or webcasting) to fulfill the promise it has always had as a superb educational medium.