

EDITORIAL

It came, it launched, it crashed – and relaunched, crashed, got tweaked a bit and relaunched, but didn't quite conquer. The My School website, managed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, was quite the centre of attention in January. Commenting in favour, Australian Council for Educational Research Chief Executive Geoff Masters pointed out that My School's reporting of actual student test results, by school and by comparison with like schools, provided real transparency, but conceded that media outlets could use the data to create school league tables. Against, Australian Education Union Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos criticised the naming and shaming of schools, calling My School's like-school comparisons 'invalid.' Writing in the *Melbourne Age*, John Marsden, award-winning author and principal of the Candlebark School north of Melbourne, described the My School website as 'morally indefensible,' but pointed out that you can find out what a school is really like by visiting it and talking with students. 'The other way of evaluating the real worth of a school is to gain access to...the kids' toilets and the staff room,' he noted. 'The quality of the lavatory facilities is the single best indicator of the respect in which children are held in a school.' **T**

IN MEMORIAM

The oldest fully-registered teacher in Victoria, Br Francis McCarthy, died at the age of 90 years in January. He began teaching in 1940, when he was 19 years old, and was still inspiring, guiding and challenging students in July last year at St Kevin's College, Melbourne, where he taught for 33 years. He was principal of Christian Brothers' College, St Kilda, and Parade College, Melbourne. **T**

FAST FACTS

- 'The Americans have need of the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys.' Sir William Preece, British Post Office, 1878.
- 'Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?' HM Warner, Warner Bros, 1927.
- 'I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.' Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943.
- 'Television won't be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months.' Darryl Zanuck, 20th Century Fox, 1946.
- 'The world potential market for copying machines is 5,000 at most.' IBM heads to the eventual founders of Xerox, 1959.
- 'There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.' Ken Olsen, Digital Equipment Corp, 1977.
- 'No one will need more than 637 KB of memory for a personal computer – 640 KB ought to be enough for anybody.' Bill Gates, Microsoft, 1981.
- 'Next Christmas the iPod will be dead.' Alan Sugar, British entrepreneur, 2005.

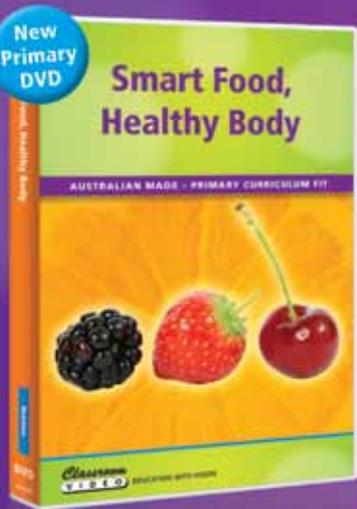
Source: Crovitz, G. (2009). *Technology predictions are mostly bunk*. *Wall Street Journal*. (27 December.)

Answers: 1. Peter Sutton, in the *Australian Literary Review*; 2. strictly, he shares the credit with Humphry Davy, Warren de la Rue, Frederick de Moelyns and Joseph Wilson Swan; 3. Jane Dobson, from Claremont College, Hobart; 4. Olive Emil-Wetter and colleagues identify a correlation between music lessons and higher academic performance; 5. true, according to Maciej Buchowski and colleagues; 6. no, according to Eyal Ophir and colleagues; 7. he plays the piano, so he doesn't have to carry a musical instrument as well; 8. false, according to Fehi Mansouri and colleagues; 9. that depends on what one means by 'help'; 10. people.

QUICK QUIZ

1. Who said the language of 'negative social indicators' 'is inadequate to the task of conveying the levels of sheer suffering that many Indigenous people are experiencing'?
2. Did Thomas Edison invent the light-bulb?
3. Who won last year's national achievement award for Excellence by a Beginning Teacher?
4. Are students who play music smarter?
5. Ten minutes of laughter a day increases your daily energy expenditure by up to 40 kilocalories. True or false?
6. Does media multi-tasking help students to pay attention?
7. While Alex Hayward lugs a 10-kilo backpack to and from school, he's luckier than some peers. Why?
8. Racism in Australian schools is declining. True or false?
9. Is a student who receives help from his or her parents guilty of cheating?
10. What does Steve Holden suggest you call the students of the next generation heading to the door of your classroom?

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