Melinda Holt Receives 2024 CCAE Lifetime Membership and Dr. Robert Rupert Awards

Melinda Holt

OTAN's Melinda Holt has been honored with two prestigious awards: the 2024 CCAE Lifetime Membership Award and the Dr. Robert Rupert Award. These awards honor Melinda's dedication and significant impact on adult education, reflecting her commitment to shaping Today's Dream into Tomorrow's Reality within the CCAE community. Join us at the 2024 CCAE State Conference on May 10, 2024, at the Anaheim Marriott to celebrate her remarkable contributions to adult education. Congratulations, Melinda, on these well-deserved recognitions!

Inside This Issue:

California's Digital Equity Plan Moves Forward

At the start of April, California announced the approval of the state's Digital Equity Plan by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The approval of the Plan allows California to apply for an initial allocation of $70.2 million of capacity grant to fund initiatives outlined in the Plan that connect residents and communities to affordable internet service, devices, digital navigation service, and digital literacy training.

California needs to submit an application to the NTIA by May 28 in order to receive its initial allocation of $70.2 million in federal capacity grant funding. In the meantime, the state will be looking for further engagement and expertise from residents and stakeholders in the coming months to help further shape programs described in the Plan.

How can we stay connected to news about participation and funding opportunities, as well as efforts to move digital equity forward?

✸ Sign up for the monthly Broadband for All newsletter - https://bit.ly/BfAnewsletter.

✸ View and download a PDF version of the California Digital Equity Plan - https://bit.ly/CAdeplan, as well as other resources, on the Broadband for All website - https://bit.ly/BfAwebpage.

CALIFORNIA Digital Equity Plan

California Department of Technology

2024

✸ The Plan's Executive Summary has been translated into seven languages: Spanish, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and Arabic. With the HTML version of the entire Plan, content can also be translated into more than a hundred additional languages.

✸ With the closing of the ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program), Californians still need free or low-cost options for devices and connectivity. CDT provides the low-cost offer finder tool - https://bit.ly/findertool, with information from EveryoneOn and CETF. The information and services provided assist Californians in finding programs in their area offering low-cost internet services, computer offers, and digital skills training.

✸ For information on digital equity efforts in other states, read the new WorldEd publication, Adult Learners and Immigrants in State Digital Equity Plans - https://bit.ly/SDEPadultlearners.

OTAN Tech Talks - Plant a Seed!

OTAN Tech Talks are a way to share know-how, tips, and tricks to the adult education field in the form of short videos. OTTs allow any adult educator, including teachers, administrators, or classified staff, to present how they use an online tool, a teaching or learning technique, or any other tip that enhances instruction or an adult education program. Planting seeds of learning across the adult education field!

The short, recorded presentations - 10 to 20 minutes in length - are held every first Friday of the month at 1:00 p.m. (Pacific Time). After the presentation, questions can then be asked by those in attendance related to the topic.

Then, OTAN remediates and cleans up the recording (mistooks plowed!) and the finished product is uploaded and planted into the OTAN YouTube channel for anyone to view at any time!

A sampling of past OTAN Tech Talk titles include Acquiring Digital Literacy Skills, Multiple Uses of Quizlet, Internet Safety, and How to Create Interactive Videos. Those videos and more are located in the OTT section of Video Presentations - otan.us/VideoPresentations/TechTalks on the OTAN website as well as on the OTAN YouTube Channel at youtube.com/@OTANServesAdultEducation within the OTT Playlist.

Watch and learn from past OTTs or register to attend an upcoming session using the CA PD Calendar at caadultedtraining.org - and, while you are at it, note how easy an OTAN Tech Talk is to do!

If you are interested in presenting an OTT or would like more information, send an email to support@otan.us with the subject: OTT Info.

Sow a seed in the form of an OTT and help the AE field thrive! ✆

Digital Leadership Academy

The Digital Leadership Academy (DLAC) has helped many agencies thrive over the years to achieve their goals in furthering technology integration at their agencies. The 2022–24 DLAC cohort will be reporting successes and hurdles they have experienced over the past two years in May 2024. Those recordings will be available for all to watch and learn from after being posted on the OTAN website as well as the OTAN YouTube Channel.

Webinars from past cohorts can also be viewed as well as testimonials from previous participants on the value of DLAC for their agencies. Visit the DLAC section of Video Presentations - otan.us/VideoPresentations/Dlac on the OTAN website. You can also use the YouTube link on the OTAN website or open the channel at youtube.com/@OTANServesAdultEducation and select the DLAC playlist.

OTAN is accepting DLAC applications for the 2024–26 cohort, and applications are due August 9, 2024. Applicants must be part of a team, have the support of their administrator, and be willing to learn and share growth with their colleagues.

More information about the Digital Leadership Academy, past cohorts, and the application process can be found on the OTAN website at: otan.us/ProfessionalDevelopment/Dlac

If you would like more information, please contact support@otan.us with the subject DLAC Information. ✆

TDLS 2024 Recap!

Did you miss OTAN's Technology and Distance Learning Symposium this year? Here's a recap!

Over 300 instructors, administrators, counselors, aides, and other support staff joined us March 1st and 2nd at Fremont Adult and Continuing Education. Just over 45% attended virtually from all over California and five other states across the US and Canada.

TDLS kicked off with a keynote address provided by Joe Marquez, Director of Academic Innovation for CUE (Computer-Using Educators). His address, "Save The Mavericks: How to Destroy The Status Quo," was a mix of inspiration, retrospection and a call to action for all adult educators and was very well-received by our audience.

TDLS attendees then headed into a variety of other EdTech-focused informational sessions. There were 52 educators, administrators, and vendors who provided 63 different informational sessions to choose from. Thirteen of these sessions were AI focused, teaching adult educators the finer points of programs they could use to make lessons easier to plan and more engaging for their students.

TDLS closed with our Tech Slam, where all attendees had the chance to grab the mic and demonstrate different tech tips and tricks they picked up either at TDLS or on the job. This is always one of TDLS' most popular sessions, and this year was no exception.

We hope that you can join us at the next TDLS in Long Beach March 7th and 8th, 2025; registration will open in early December. Looking to present? Call for proposals will open this October. We'll see you there! ⊘

AI: What We've Learned, Where We're Going

AI (Artificial Intelligence) has become a hot topic this school year, and OTAN staff and trainers recently debriefed to discuss what we've learned through our presentations as well as those we've attended by others, and where we think OTAN should focus as AI continues to gain steam.

The introduction of AI appears to be a seminal moment, like the beginnings of the internet. There are still many adult educators who haven't experimented with AI for several reasons, although we know that our students are using it. There are concerns about privacy, security, the use of data, and academic issues such as cheating and plagiarism, but there is also excitement with new possibilities that we share in presentations. That said, things have been moving so quickly with AI that we work to stay current, often updating presentation slides created just a few months prior.
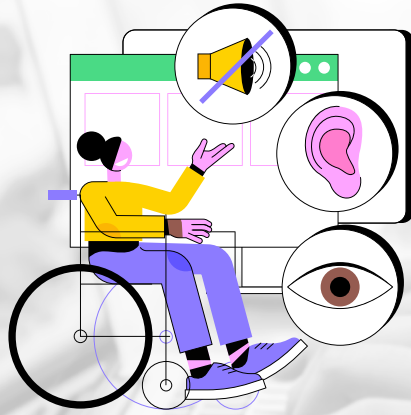
As we become more proficient using AI, OTAN wants to get below the surface to explore issues such as access, equity, safety, bias, reliability, and others. How adult learners and educators can use AI in responsible ways is topmost in our minds. We want to better understand the line between one's personal voice and one's use of AI when creating. Like other technology tools, we want to discover how AI can best support good instruction and learning and not become the be-all and end-all of those things.

We're excited to continue learning about AI with our colleagues and think about where we are headed as AI transforms our work and learning. Reach out to OTAN with your support questions and requests! ⊘
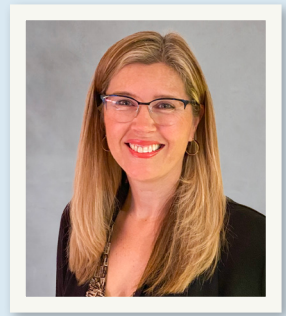
Accessibility Tip

To improve accessibility for all users, try to make the link text descriptive rather than using generic phrases like "click here" or "read more" when adding links to your content. Create meaningful link texts that accurately describe the destination or action.

Imagine you're guiding a friend through a website – what would you say to help them understand where the link leads? For example, instead of "click here for more info," you could write "find out more about our services." This not only helps people using screen readers, but also makes it easier for everyone to understand what they're clicking on. By prioritizing descriptive link text, you're not just improving accessibility; you're also making the browsing experience friendlier and more intuitive for everyone. ☉

From the Adult Education Director

What is your plan to thrive in 24–25? As Director of OTAN, I want to build more time for intentional reflection and celebration of OTAN's work and to set deliberate SMART goals and benchmarks tied to our projects.

This year the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) required three goals, with one of them being specific to technology. OTAN wants to support you on your journey to achieve these goals. Whatever your technology goal is for 24–25, you can find a partner in OTAN. Reach out to us to start this collaborative effort.

I also want to take this time to celebrate one of our retiring staff. The California Council for Adult Education (CCAE) has awarded OTAN Project Specialist II, Melinda Holt, the 2024 Dr. Robert Rupert Award, recognizing an exceptional individual whose impact on adult education has been widely acknowledged, and the 2024 Lifetime Membership Award, recognizing exceptional retiring CCAE members. A pivotal figure at OTAN, Melinda's impact transcends wires and screens, leaving an indelible mark on adult education.

Let us thrive together in 24–25! Reach out by phone or email at 916-228-2580 and support@otan.us. Be safe and well as you start your summer! ☉

Renee Collins
Adult Education Director

Scan these QR codes to learn more about these exciting OTAN resources!

The Digital Leadership Academy (DLAC) 2024–26 is a two-year PD opportunity to master technology integration and conquer your digital challenges. Apply today.

Schedule an OTAN online or virtual training for your team. Click this QR for information about What OTAN Offers and then email OTAN at support@otan.us.