Conversations on Technology
What did your colleagues think?

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This conversation also is available from the Learning Through Technology web site,
http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/nise/cl1/lt/
Conversations on Technology: What did your colleagues think?

Question #5: "I'm the first one in my department to consider using learning technology. How are my colleagues going to view this?"

They will think you are nuts and they will watch to see how much of your time it takes.

If you do not have tenure, you need to talk to the senior faculty and find out how to spend your time. If you are in a "research only" department, you need to know that and act accordingly. Once the tenure decision is made, then most schools appreciate curriculum innovation. You need to know the local traditions.

Like in everything, pioneers have difficulty at the beginning with their peers. Yes you will have some resistance but technology is here to stay. They are going to stay behind. Bring respected speakers to your institution to talk about the subject and support your interest.

Hmmm...I was the first in my department too at my previous job. My colleagues were interested. I already had tenure so I had nothing to loose. Technology gave me the opportunity to do research with two students and present the results at ACS meetings. Here I was hired to infuse technology into the courses in this department. The administration is funding younger faculty to develop projects. You should apply for a mini-grant to develop one or two applications for your classes. We are lucky here. I will be happy to read your proposal for you and give you some hints. Get in touch with the IT director. He will give you the names of some successful project developers and you can ask them how they are doing and what they are doing.

Unfortunately on some other campuses there are faculty who resist technology and think negatively about faculty who do get involved. I don't think we have such a problem here on our campus. We are lucky. You will need to talk to the Chair of your department about tenure requirements vis-à-vis IT in the
classroom. Some departments give education development scholarship credit for this type of work for promotion or tenure. But be sure your basic research projects don't get neglected.

Your colleagues won't care. My time invested in learning technology was motivated by a software development grant of significant size, so I am not a good example to use.

My guess is that the answer to this may vary with department and course being taught. Mostly your colleagues will be sympathetic, except for those terrified by novelty.

In my department nearly all the faculty use technology. If they do not they often miss many of the changes that are happening in education today.