

is in the lead with 270 entries , followed by the Usa with 63, Israel = with 29 and Germany with 26. But all the European nations have = contributed, including Estonia, Lithuania and the Balkan countries. The = contest also attracted a lot of interest from Latin America, including = an amazing 14 projects from Colombia of all places. The organisers were = also intrigued to receive so many entries from countries that are not = usually thought of as digitally minded such as Bangladesh, Cameroon, = Kenya, Jamaica, Malaysia, the Maldives and Swaziland.=20

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The magnitude of this Global response to Rome's Global Challenge has = transformed the contest into the world's first databank of best = practices in the field of digital training, that offers a comprehensive = overview of how much is being done and what new trends are emerging. It = is equally significant that over half the projects (256 entries) came = from schools of every kind and grade, the remainder being contributed by = Universities, leading research centres, corporations, museums, cultural = associations, foundations and individuals. All these contestants have = entered projects large and small, all using the Internet mainly for the = purposes of cultural exchange and educating the young in the history and = geography of distant lands, in the importance of the environment and in = the problems of multicultural society. Some of these projects draw = together a large number of countries and thousands of young people from = all over the planet engaging them in a genuine intercultural dialogue. = Others use the internet as a multimedia tool, deploying a whole host of = innovative technologies like web cam, video conferencing, chat, rooms = and so on. A large number of other projects involved innovative teaching = systems using advanced, interactive technologies both to introduce young = people to the world of work and also to create new jobs.=20

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However just as it produced the most entries (270 projects) Italy also = contributed the biggest surprises of the contest painting an exciting = portrait of the nation as an information society whose palpitating heart = lies at the centre of the country which contributed 152 projects with = powerful off-shoots in both the north (72 projects) and the south = including the islands (33 projects). Italy was also involved in a = further 13 inter-regional and international projects. Here too, over = half the projects came from the nation's education system, elementary = schools as well as Universities, thereby disproving the myth of = passivity and reluctance to change among the nation's educational = institutions. What the Global Challenge has revealed is a highly = dynamic education system that is fully alert to the teaching potential = of the new technologies, albeit in a less than systematic fashion. In = the absence of any coordinated effort, the uptake of IT resources = depends entirely on the individual school's organisational capacity and = enthusiasm. Successes are almost always the fruit of cooperation between = pupils and teachers and here we find a very high level of creativity = that covers everything from on-line newspapers to CDs and didactic = hypertexts and thousands of websites, often highly original and = frequently the work of the students themselves. Many of their projects = are also concerned with education and training and include special = projects for the young disabled.

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Now all that remains is for the international jury to select a = short-list of 50 projects that will form the subject of a major = exhibition to be held in the Fiera di Roma Exhibition Centre on December = 4-5. From that short -list the jury will then select the contest winners =