

## The Solar Education Initiative



The SEI aims at providing free education to as many transhumans as possible. It delivers a vast array of educational software, XP, simspaces, teacher AIs and pedagogical Muse modules - for free. Most of the edusoft is geared towards basic education (up to the old highschool level), although there exists various extensions all the way up to university level training in some subject. It is intended to work as standalone applications with no need for long-range Mesh links: once downloaded into a personal computing environment it can be studied at will, possibly with pedagogical support from the user's muse or a packaged teacher AI.

SEI is sponsored by the Planetary Consortium, the Morningstar Constellation and a number of the top universities of Mars.

At first it might appear strange that the hypercapitalist Planetary Consortium sponsors free education, but it does so for pragmatic reasons. Thanks to the Autonomists and Argonauts, freeware education is always going to exist. It would be stupid not to meet this potential propaganda channel with something similar. Hence the PC supports the SEI as a bulwark against autonomist propaganda and as a way of educating people about its vision. The best thing is that autonomists have a hard time blocking free transmissions even when they regard them as insidious propaganda. Especially if they really are high quality, useful material that is hard to produce in the new economy.

There is also a safety aspect to SEI. A well-educated and competent transhumanity is much more likely to survive future threats. By inoculating people against known dangerous memes, showing how to handle risky technologies safely and how to survive in a crisis SEI promotes a more resilient civilization. Autonomists of course claim the courses scare pupils into thinking that free nanofactory, AGI and the reputation economy is dangerous or unstable, but the information itself is entirely factual and useful – any bias lies in the selection and presentation.

Nearly anybody born after the Fall has fond memories of Dr Drex and his course in toymaking (which is actually an introduction to home nanofactory, with elementary virtual design and nanosafety) and the hilarious misadventures of Rollo (practical safety: Rollo has managed to be crushed, hacked, decompressed, egonapped, disassembled, darkcasted, irradiated, eaten and everything else a careless transhuman could (and couldn't) end up in).

The universities that sponsor SEI also do so out of enlightened self-interest. They know that the better people are educated, the more they will want higher education. There will be more competition for the limited places at elite universities and the selected students will also be much better (since they can be selected from a larger pool of applicants and the average standard is higher).

While the software and XP are free, there are numerous commercial upgrades giving access to deeper teaching, specialities and enticing edusims. Some of the software also allows you to unlock various goodies such as access to professional educasts and chances at scholarships at sponsoring schools and universities. Thanks to SEI the Consortium universities have a chance to attract some of the brightest and most curious young minds in the solar system.

There are plenty of rumours that SEI edusofts spy on its users, reporting them to shadowy PC agencies. But then again, who knows what noname edusofts do to your children? The softs from TAU are certainly decent, but their well-meaning, doctrinaire Titan-brand of education annoys just as many people as are scared away by rumours about SEI trickery. In fact (and this is no doubt a source of great glee in the inner system), some Titanian youngsters use SEI edusofts just to outrage their parents.

Some polities of course directly resist SEI. The Jovian Republic regards it as unadulterated propaganda and censors it fiercely. Many Brinkers also try to ignore the communications from the solar system they have seceded from. But bootleg edusofts have a surprising tendency to spread: parents want to give their kids (and themselves) education.