Think of "My Space"…with content…with purpose. To engage today's youth to find inspiration, access information and get involved in their local and global communities --that is what inspired Michael Furdyk to co-found the www.takingITGlobal.org site. Just having celebrated its first anniversary, TIG has already reached over 140,000 youths in over 200 countries. This is a non-profit organization, whose key partner is Microsoft, through a U.S. Partners in Learning grant supporting outreach in the United States. TakingITGlobal.org and its host of interactive tools and resources translates classroom learning into tangible action on today's most pressing global issues. You can explore uses of virtual classrooms, a standards-linked activities database, blogs, podcasts, as well as best practices for integrating topics. All this with controls to allow teachers to monitor/protect their students at a variety of levels.

What also excited me are the additional possibilities for our schools in Florida to inter-Connect, as well as connecting with the sister schools in Qingdao. For a paltry $30.00 per annum, a class may establish a "virtual presence." An entire school for $300.00.
Schools could enhance their cross-curriculm programs between language, technology, social studies, economics, etc. within their school.
Schools in Florida studying languages could interact with other schools for competitions And/or to jointly work on projects.
Universities could develop outreach to both teachers and students within the state.
Schools could link to their sister schools in Qingdao to develop an ongoing relationship.
The possibilities are tremendous.

I spoke with Michael Furdyk after the presentation. I explained the situation in Florida and what we are trying to accomplish. He has agreed to visit Miami if enough schools are interested. He has also given us a 6 week trial period on the site. When you Register, in step 4, under payment, type in ISSA2007, the promotional code.
I also asked him two questions:
"Have you had any problems linking with China?" His reply was that they have not had any problems. However, he is sensitive to the situation and has decided to take a pro-active position and modify his platform, as Google and Microsoft had.
"Do you have translating capabilities on the site?" He answered, "At this time I believe translating capabilities are "too literal" and that Google offers the best one available." However, he has contacts in Google, and as the technology develops he is certainly open to incorporating that technology onto his site.

If you have any problems registering, contact Luke@takingITGlobal.org.
Again, the promotional code is ISSA2007.