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“So much to do and so little time”—this the familiar lament of teachers worldwide.

And that is counting just the numbers of books, paper, and pencils that are used daily not accounting for the other numerous consumers of time.

Well, rev up your adventurous spirit and hang on to your hats! With this hands-on tour of the Internet, we are about to glide (not zoom) through a universe of knowledge that reduces student essays, even whole textbooks, to mere blips on the screen or, if you will, clicks on the mouse.

And do you know what? Even if you complete every one of this book’s activities, you and your students will only have scratched the surface of the Internet, if it had one, that is.

That vastness is part of the fun and challenge of teaching with the Internet.

Notice, though, that I say *teaching* with the Internet. The Internet is a tool, a resource, an enhancement to the all-important job you perform every day.

This book is a tool, as well, just a little something to reinforce what you are already doing in your classroom, or the lab, or even at home.

How to Use This Book

Internet for Kids is not meant to be a comprehensive look at the Internet. I will leave that to those books that are so large you can read their titles at a hundred paces. In this book, I will give you some of the basics of connecting with the seemingly unlimited, always-changing Internet’s educational resources. For starters, here are . . .

The Basics of the Basics

Hardware you will need:

1. PCs that are 386 or faster or 68030 Macs or Power Macs, the faster, the better
2. A computer with at least eight megabytes of random access memory and a 250-megabyte or larger hard disk (You can get by with less.)
3. A modem with a speed of at least 14,400 bits per second

For full Internet access, you will need the following tools:

1. E-mail software
2. Newsreader software (This manager enables you to access Usenet news groups.)
3. File-transfer-protocol client software
4. Gopher client software
5. Telnet software
6. World Wide Web browser (Your browser has probably incorporated tools 1-5.)
7. TCP/IP software (I saved the most important for the last. This provides your basic connection to the Net.)

* A very helpful addition, if your school has the funds, is some kind of projection system that will allow for more full-class demonstrations and browsing.



And now it is on to the activities—the real purpose of the book—which, I hope your students will enjoy, learn from, and embellish beyond the point of recognition.

But first . . .

Point #1: To tighten integration with your curriculum, choose related subjects for your students to explore.

Point #2: Provide teachers and students with something tangible to show for their efforts.

Thus, with most activities, I have provided a worksheet (I will also refer to it as a “product page”) that can guide users through the steps and help reinforce learning. I see some of these activities as good open house material.

For the purposes of the book, I will separate the major capabilities/services (i.e., news groups, mailing lists, file transfer protocol, Gopher searches, etc.) of the Internet, but by the time you read this book, most or all of these capabilities will be accessible through a few point-and-clicks on your World Wide Web browsers. So most of the activities will be Web based, as your browser will more than likely provide your quickest routes to the other tools, which leads me to . . .

Point #3: As a teacher of 16 years, I would want a book to get my students and me to our destinations as easily as possible.

This leads me to some assumptions about you readers who are the reason for this book.

- You have access to a “hooked-up” computer (one that is already connected to the Internet, including the World Wide Web).
- As teachers with limited teaching time, you are master improvisors and can make do with just enough information to guide you. Then you take it from there. In other words, I do not want to be condescending.
- You (or dependable students) have a basic comfort with navigating through your computer’s operating system, whether it is Microsoft Windows or the Macintosh OS.
- With my activities, I am trying to reach as many students as possible. It is easy to scale down teaching activities to one student but not so easy to make them workable for 30. Depending on your computer resources and amount of access to them, each activity could last from one day to two weeks.
- With a limited number of computers, you will probably want to have your students work in groups with adult supervision. Some final points:
- None of the activities will require your knowledge of hypertext markup language (HTML) or of Web-page creation. It is great material, but covering those subjects in a two-page lesson just would not do them justice.
- Spend some time reading the section on copyright. I am not passing myself off as an expert in the gray areas surrounding publishing on the Internet, but I think this section raises a few issues we teachers may need to consider.

Let us move on. Education on the Internet awaits us.

CREATE A CLASS HOTLIST



Subject Area: Various

Opening Comments

A hotlist is a collection of Web sites that you plan to conveniently revisit with your Web browser. Simply add the site to your list, and when you wish to visit it in the future, you pull down a menu and select it by name. No typing of lengthy, awkward URLs is needed. Having each student add a favorite site may take awhile, but there is no reason to have a set deadline. "Create a Class Hotlist" gives your students browsing time, encourages them to process and present new information, and offers them some ownership in its Net activities. Finally, feel free to set some criteria for your students' choices of hotlist items. This is, after all, an educational activity, and some kids may appreciate the direction.

Helpful Internet Site(s)

Any of the search engines are good starting points. Using them will allow your students to start with their own personal interests and follow links from the engines' lists of hits.

Setting the Stage

- Practise with your browser software's hotlist management capabilities. Most allow you to organise by folders or categories.
- Model the process of adding a site to a class hotlist and then presenting it.
- Tell your students they will be expected to: (1) Contribute an interesting Web site to the class hotlist. (2) Know the site well enough to present it to a group of students or the whole class. (You can make a graded oral language activity out of the presentation.)

Procedure

1. Give your students a set amount of time to browse for a new site.
2. Assure them that it is not so important for them to find their favorite sites. More important, they should seek a new and interesting site.
3. Your students will find their site, hotlist (known to Netscapers as bookmark) it, and take notes, using the worksheet on page 29.
4. Your students should revisit the site at least once to sharpen their presentations and practice.
5. When ready, your students will demonstrate their Web site's merits to other students in your class.

Things to Consider

- Have your students share information about their sites on a mailing list your class is subscribed to.
- Limit your desired sites to a single subject area.
- Have your students inform their chosen sites' Webmasters that their work has qualified for the class hotlist.
- Divide the hotlist according to:
 - subject areas
 - student groups
- For more identifiable titles, your browser lets you edit the names of the items you have hotlisted.

