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(AS) = Activity Sheet



Introduction

As primary schools connect to the Internet, a new vast and exciting resource becomes available to teachers and children. The purpose of this book is to provide:

- an easy introduction to those who are new to the Internet
- suitable websites to support children's learning and from which they can obtain information quickly
- enjoyable and challenging activities which support children's historical research using the Internet.

The book does not suggest that traditional sources of information - books, libraries, videos - should be replaced, but rather that different sources and types of information have now become accessible.

The Internet is a good place for

- locating information not available in textbooks or the library
- finding and contacting experts on a subject
- communicating with children in different parts of the world
- obtaining up-to-date information
- accessing information and images which are otherwise difficult or time-consuming to obtain
- publishing your own work for others to use.

The Internet is not a good place for

- finding quick summaries or overviews of a topic
- children to research freely and unsupervised
- replacing hands-on activities, such as practical investigations
- finding material that has necessarily been well researched and is accurate.

Using this book

The websites mentioned in this book are a mixture of Australian, UK and US sites. Please be aware that the spellings on the US sites will obviously be in American English.

At the time of publication **all** the sites listed are free and we have not referred to any sites which require subscriptions. However, we do refer to shareware sites, from which you can download software free for a limited time, but are then charged.

The Internet is constantly changing and so are the sites that appear on it. We cannot guarantee that all the sites and links mentioned in this book will remain as described (some might disappear altogether). Therefore, any comments about specific sites, such as the level of text difficulty, speed of loading, etc., are based on the status of the site when the book was written and subsequent upgrades might alter such facts.

N.B. The screenshots in this book have been taken directly from the Internet. The quality of some of these may look poor, however, this is because they are intended to be looked at on-screen rather than reproduced on a printed page.

Working off-line

When using sites it might well be more useful to download the site for the children to use: to save time on the Internet and to provide a permanent resource. In this way, all the children can be working off-line on a site at the same time. There are many commercially available programs for you to try, such as

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WebWhacker (available from <http://www.ffg.com>), which can capture whole sites. Often these programs work in the background while you continue searching elsewhere on the Internet.

Other programs, such as *Secret Agent*, will allow you to work off-line by loading files from your 'cache' (the store on your hard disk where your visited pages are kept when on-line). However, these files are not permanent and would be lost if you did not save them. You may wish to save certain pages manually, using the 'file and save' option in your browser, although this will take longer. This, however, only saves text, unless you are using the latest version of your browser, so you will also need to save images using the right button on your mouse to click on the images.

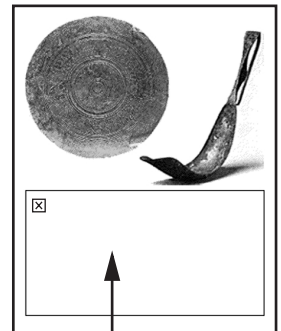


What if pages do not look the same off-line?

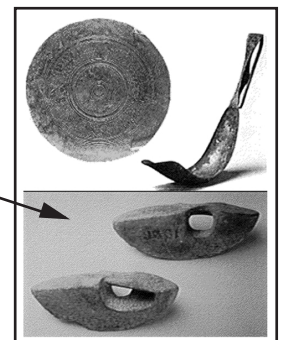
The problem is usually that images are not displayed. If an image does not load off-line, often it will be simply a matter of checking the HTML* link to it in your browser.

Display the source HTML code to look for the image reference, e.g. `
` and change the link to where you have saved the images, e.g. `
`

Save this file and the next time you open the page in your browser, the image will appear.



missing image



Using web addresses

*Above, we have mentioned 'HTML'. This is the HyperText Markup Language which is the standard language that everyone on the Internet has used to create pages (although other new languages are now being added). To access a page, an address is typed into the box at the top of your browser.



The address is referred to as a site's URL (Uniform Resource Locator) and usually begins with `http://` which tells your browser that it is making a web connection. **online.nmit.vic.edu.au** is the name of the web server, the computer where the pages are stored (in the case of the NMIT example). `/link/` shows the directory where we want to look.

You can store addresses of sites which are useful using the bookmarking or 'favourites' option in your browser.

First steps

Here are some suggestions for excellent sites which you may want to visit first, containing information and many links to browse for yourself.

- The Education Australia site is increasing and is a source of information and teaching materials for teachers at <http://online.nmit.vic.edu.au/link>
- The ABC site is an excellently designed, massive resource and is organised in many sections at <http://abc.gov.au>
- There are many link pages to museums around the world, one can be found at <http://vlmp.museophile.com/world.html>