

## Internet for Kids Class Shares Ideas for Using the Web

When a diverse group of students, ages 9 - 14, participated in our recent Internet classes, not only did they learn about the world-wide web, they also taught us a thing or two. Using Netscape on both Macintosh and PC platforms, the students solved riddles, researched topics for school, and explored sites ranging from the Exploratorium to "Beanie Babies."

The students mostly enjoyed sites that challenged their thinking without relying on fancy graphics. In particular, the Forensic Files site (<http://forensicfiles.bc.sympatico.ca/>) kept one group of kids so captivated, they were still trying to solve the mystery half an hour after class. In this largely text-based site, the students took on the role of an assistant detective as each page offered new clues and options for solving the mystery.

On the other hand, the students, like many adults, found that seemingly promising sites often disappointed. For instance, looking up statistics on Michael Jordan led to tantalizing sports sites which could only be accessed with a password. In other cases, "fancy" sites with lots of graphics and animated icons proved overwhelming for our modem connections and just took too long to load.

Web access was another goal of our class. Collaborating with one another was probably the best strategy, but we also enlarged the text on the screen and used an IntelliKeys overlay for easier visual and physical access to Netscape. In spite of this, some kids were frustrated by the delays while pages loaded, the relative lack of graphics and action (compared to CD-ROMs, for instance), and the lack of a simple but effective text-to-speech tool.

All in all, though, the web can be a great tool for study and fun, especially when kids have a specific goal in mind and appropriate help finding and bookmarking related sites.

As you begin your Web journey, consider a few of our favorite sites &ndash; and be sure to share with us your own discoveries!

### Favorite Places to Get Started:

- Yahoooligans (<http://www.yahoooligans.com/>) A search engine for kids.
- Uncle Bob's Kids' Page (<http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/kids.html>) Many links by topic, including space, Star Trek, Disney, literature, and much more.
- Kids Web (<http://www.npac.syr.edu:80/textbook/kidsweb/fastindex.html>) A World Wide Web Digital Library for Schoolkids.
- Dragonfly Home Page (<http://miavx1.acs.muohio.edu/~dragonfly/index.html>) An on-line magazine with 100 links to other cool kid sites, including electronic books.
- Scholastic Network (<http://scholastic.com>) Internet links and ideas for using the Net.

### Homework Helpers:

- Research-It! (<http://www.iTools.com/research-it/research-it.html>) A one-stop reference desk with dictionaries, thesauruses, quote finders, etc.
- Virtual Tourist II World Map (<http://www.vtourist.com/vt/>) Browse web sites around the world by clicking on the map.
- Exploratorium (<http://www.exploratorium.edu/>) Very cool, with great links to other interesting sites.
- Science Friday Kids Talk (<http://www.npr.org/sfkids/ScienceTalk/>) Share ideas or ask an expert for help with your nagging science questions.
- National Air & Space Museum Home Page (<http://www.nasm.edu/NASMPage.html>).
- PlaneMath (<http://www.planemath.com>) Cool math & aeronautics activities with disabled role models.
- Automated Weather Source Nationwide School Weather Network (<http://aws.com/>) One of many great weather sites, with interactive project for students.
- CityNet (<http://www.city.net/>) Look up info on any city anywhere and find some great links.

- Infoseek (<http://www.infoseek.com/>) Find your house on a map!
- Frog Dissection (<http://george.lbl.gov:80/vfrog/dissect.html>) Dissect a frog without getting messy.
- The Origami Shop (<http://www.ibm.com/Stretch/EOS/>) Submit your own artwork to the web!
- San Diego Live (<http://live.net/sandiego/>) Check out the weather in Real Time.

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