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ERIC Identifier: ED424189
Publication Date: 1998-10-00
Author: VanFossen, Phillip J.
Source: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education Bloomington IN.

World Wide Web Resources for Teaching and Learning Economics. ERIC Digest.

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We live in an information-rich society, one in which, via various forms of technology, information on almost any topic can be obtained nearly instantaneously. The proliferation of such information technology has begun to make its way into the nation's schools in the form of, among other things, instructional resources such as videodiscs, CD-ROMs and other computer-driven materials, and the nearly ubiquitous World Wide Web (WWW). Indeed, in 1996, 64% of schools nationwide had WWW access (Coley et al., 1997).

Technological resources abound for teachers of all subject areas and all grade levels, but for many reasons, such instructional technology seems to lend itself to the social studies at least as well as for any other subject area (Braun et al., 1998). Certainly this is true in the realm of economic education (Boldt et al., 1994). Leu, et al. (1997), however, found that many teachers who tried to employ the WWW in their teaching lacked the skills needed to efficiently use the resource. As a result, these teachers and their students often wasted time endlessly "surfing" the WWW for content-specific sites. In an attempt to aid the economic educator in using the WWW more efficiently and effectively in classroom instruction, this ERIC Digest provides an overview of WWW sites that can be used to improve instruction in K-12 economic education. This review will follow the major categories of WWW usage outlined by Leu et al., (1997) and others in this field: (1) The World Wide Web as a teacher resource, (2) The World Wide Web as a student resource, and (3) interactive World Wide Web-based lessons.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Teachers who use the WWW as an instructional resource are interested in acquiring knowledge of economic concepts and principles (e.g., supply and demand, marginal cost, etc.) and in identifying instructional plans that might be used to teach these various economics concepts. The following WWW sites are excellent examples:

* THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION (NCEE) WEBSITE

<http://nationalcouncil.org> provides descriptions of the NationalCouncil and its two outreach programs, EconomicsAmerica andEconomicsInternational. Readers can access an on-line version of the NCECurriculum catalog and order materials. In addition, each of the 20"Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics" (Meszaros 1997) can beprinted or downloaded from a link at this site. These "Standards" includestudent performance benchmarks that outline what economic content shouldbe covered at various grade levels.

* EcEdWeb <http://ecedweb.unomaha.edu>, developed by the University of Nebraska at Omaha's (UNO) Center for Economic Education, is the most comprehensive economic education site on the WWW. EcEdWeb provides support for economics teachers across all grade levels in its "Economics Resources for K-12 Teachers" section. Here teachers can access curriculum materials, including lesson plans for teaching various economics concepts, suggestions for integrating the WWW into
teaching, and useful Internet and WWW sites for developing both teacher and student
background in economics. Perhaps the most useful aspect of EcEdWeb for economic
educators is the link to the homepage for "Economics is Elementary," a course offered
by the UNO Center for Economic Education. Here teachers can find the course reading
list, links to other economics lessons and Web sites, and a variety of Web-based ideas
for incorporating economics into the elementary grades.

* CyberTeach <http://www.economicsamerica.org/econedlink/cyberteach/index.html>
provides an overview of using the WWW to teach economics. Readers can access a
guide that makes it easy for teachers to access web sites that inform and enliven any
economics curriculum. These sites include information on basic web skills, provide
examples of lessons that teach economic concepts, and give step-by-step instructions
on how to construct economics lessons using the Internet.

* CyberEconomics <http://ingrimayne.saintjoe.edu/econ/> is a multi-media site designed
to provide an interactive supplement to a course on the principles of economics. The
author of CyberEconomics has developed a complete, hypertext-based course in
introductory microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts. Classroom teachers
searching for answers to their economic content questions should begin their search
here.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

When students use the WWW to acquire knowledge and gather information, they can
"expand their understanding of important concepts and communicate these ideas more
effectively" (Leu, et al. 1997, 14). Indeed, one of the most powerful aspects of the
WWW is its ability to provide access to the most up-to-date information available. Carr
(1994) indicated that the use of current information about economics found in
newspapers and magazines could enhance all students' understanding and
appreciation of economics. Several of the following student resource sites provide
access to, in some cases, up-to-the minute economic information.

* USA Today's Economy Track
<http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/econ0001.htm> provides students with
practical articles and statistics on all aspects of the United States' economic conditions.
Many of the charts and graphs can be downloaded and used to develop data analysis
lessons.

was written and is maintained by a professor of economics at Oklahoma State
University. Using simple, easy to understand terms, Professor Amos explains even very
difficult economic concepts clearly. The text is hyper-linked to an on-line glossary of
economic terms and the topics of the case studies discussed (education, professional
sports, etc.) are all relevant to students' lives. An interesting feature of this site is the
"self-test" on a variety of economic topics that readers can take, submit for corrections,
and receive feedback on.

* EconomicsMinute <http://www.economicsamerica.org/econedlink/minute/index.html> helps students explore the economics behind the news of the week. EconomicsMinute provides links to newspapers and news channels, classroom discussion questions, and suggested classroom activities, all of which can enhance current events discussions in any subject area.

**INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The final category of WWW usage involves students going beyond simply using the WWW as an information resource and actually participating in on-line instructional activities. Perhaps the best model of this type of activity is the WebQuest (Dodge 1995). These interactive modules require students to complete a specific, content-oriented task for which all necessary resources are embedded in the on-line lesson using hypertext. Several of the examples listed below employ a modified WebQuest design.

* NetNewsLine <http://www.economicsamerica.org/econedlink/newsline/index.html> is a recent addition to the NCEE Website and is co-sponsored by MCI. NetNewsLine features truly interactive Web-based lessons developed around timely topics in economics (e.g., the "economics" of professional sports). Students are given a variety of tasks--including conducting research and creating reports--all of which must be completed using WWW-based resources.

* SMG2000 <http://www.smg2000.org/> is an on-line simulation of the popular Securities Industry Association's Stock Market Game (Wood et al., 1992). SMG2000 is a new version of The Stock Market Game. Students are given a hypothetical account of $100,000 and enter their transactions using the Internet. Students can access their portfolios the following business day.

* Escape from Knab <http://www.escapefromknab.com/index.html> is an on-line simulation in which students venture to planet Knab ("a strange and slimy place") and, in order to survive, must make a number of successful decisions after weighing various consequences. Because students must engage in cost-benefit analysis and allocate scarce resources, this simulation provides several economics-based teaching opportunities.

**CONCLUSION**

The WWW is a powerful resource for all economic educators and their students. This ERIC Digest has provided an overview of several WWW-based resources for teaching and learning K-12 economics. While this list is necessarily truncated, the sites presented here can be considered among the best and are certainly an excellent place for the neophyte user to begin.
REFERENCES AND ERIC RESOURCES


Carr, Fred M. "Enhancing K-12 Economic Education with Contemporary Information Resources." CLEARINGHOUSE 67 (July/August 1994): 348-353. EJ 490 768.


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This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract RR93002014. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.
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Title: World Wide Web Resources for Teaching and Learning Economics. ERIC Digest.

Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Available From: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 2805 East Tenth Street, Suite 120, Bloomington, IN, 47408; Tel: 800-266-3815.


Identifiers: ERIC Digests

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