

CHAP12

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Chapter 1

CHAP12

1.1 Chapter 12: EDUCATION AND THE NET

If you're a teacher, you've probably already begun to see the potential the Net has for use in the class. Usenet , ftp and telnet have tremendous educational potential, from keeping up with world events to arranging international science experiments.

Educational resources

Usenet educational resources

Because the Net now reaches so many countries and often stays online even when the phones go down, you and your students can "tune in" to first-hand accounts during international conflicts. Look at your system's list of Usenet soc.culture groups to see if there is one about the country or region you're interested in. Even in peacetime, these newsgroups can be great places to find people from countries you might be studying.

The biggest problem may be getting accounts for your students, if you're not lucky enough to live within the local calling area of a Free-Net system. Many colleges and universities, however, are willing to discuss providing accounts for secondary students at little or no cost. Several states, including California and Texas, have Internet-linked networks for teachers and students.

1.2 Chapter 12: Education (1 of 2) -- EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

In addition, there are a number of resources on the Internet aimed specifically at elementary and secondary students and teachers. You can use these to set up science experiments with classes in another country, learn how to use computers in the classroom or keep up with the latest advances in teaching everything from physics to physical education.

Among these resources:

K12NET: Begun on the Fidonet hobbyist network, K12Net is now also carried on many Usenet systems and provides a host of interesting and valuable services. These include international chat for students, foreign-language discussions (for example, there are French and German-

only conference where American students can practice those languages with students from Quebec and German). There are also conferences aimed at teachers of specific subjects, from physical education to physics.

The K12 network still has limited distribution, so ask your system administrator if your system carries it.

SPACEMET: If your system doesn't carry K12, but has access to telnet , you can reach it through SpaceMet Forum, a bulletin-board system aimed at teachers and students that is run by the physics and astronomy department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The address is spacemet.phast.umass.edu. When you connect, hit escape once.

Like K12, SpaceMet Forum began as a Fidonet system, but has since grown much larger. Mort and Helen Sternheim, professors at the university, started SpaceMet as a one-line bulletin-board system several years ago to help bolster middle-school science education in nearby towns.

Today, there is a whole series of satellite SpaceMet BBSs in western Massachusetts and SpaceMet itself is now linked to Fidonet and Internet.

In addition to the K12 conferences, SpaceMet carries numerous educationally oriented conferences. It also has a large file library of interest to educators and students, but be aware that getting files to your site could be difficult and maybe even impossible. Unlike most other Internet sites, Spacemet does not use an ftp interface. The Sternheims say ZMODEM sometimes works over the network, but don't count on it.

KIDSPHERE: Kidsphere is a mailing list for elementary and secondary teachers, who use it to arrange joint projects and discuss educational telecommunications. You will find news of new software, lists of sites from which you can get computer-graphics pictures from various NASA satellites and probes and other news of interest to modem-using teachers.

To subscribe, send a request by e-mail to kidsphere-request@vms.cis.pitt.edu or joinkids@vms.cis.pitt.edu and you will start receiving messages within a couple of days.

To contribute to the discussion, send messages to kidsphere@vms.cis.pitt.edu.

KIDS is a spin-off of KIDSPHERE just for students who want to contact students. To subscribe, send a request to joinkids@vms.cis.pitt.edu, as above. To contribute, send messages to kids@vms.cis.pitt.edu.

HEALTH-ED: A mailing list for health educators. Send a request to health-ed-request@stjhmc.fidonet.org

Hemingway: PAPA is a mailing list about Hemingway and his work. To get on the list, send a request to dgross@polyslo.calpoly.edu.

NASA SPACELINK: This system, run by NASA in Huntsville, Ala., provides all sorts of reports and data about NASA, its history and its various missions, past and present. Telnet spacelink.msfc.nasa.gov or 128.158.13.250.

When you connect, you'll be given an overview of the system and asked to register. The system maintains a large file library of GIF-format space graphics, but note that you can't download these through telnet. If you want to, you have to dial the system directly, at (205) 895-0028. Many can be obtained through ftp from ames.arc.nasa.gov, however.

NEWTON: This is another BBS-like system, run by the Argonne National Laboratory. It offers conferences for teachers and students, including one called "Ask a Scientist."

Telnet: newton.dep.anl.gov.
Log in as: cocotext

You'll be asked to provide your name and address. When you get the main menu, hit 4 for the various conferences. The "Ask a Scientist" category lets you ask questions of scientists in fields from biology to earth science. Other categories let you discuss teaching, sports and computer networks.

FTP : To get a list of ftp sites that carry astronomical images in the GIF graphics format, use ftp to connect to nic.funet.fi. Switch to the /pub/astro/general directory and get the file astroftp.txt. Among the sites listed is ames.arc.nasa.gov, which carries images taken by the Voyager and Galileo probes, among other pictures.

1.3 Chapter 12: Education (2 of 2) -- USENET EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

There are numerous Usenet newsgroups of potential interest to teachers and students.

As you might expect, many are of a scientific bent. You can find these by typing `l sci. in rn` or using `nngrep sci. for nn`. There are now close to 40, with subjects ranging from archaeology to economics (the "dismal science," remember?) to astronomy to nanotechnology (the construction of microscopically small machines).

One thing students will quickly learn from many of these groups: science is not just dull, boring facts. Science is argument and standing your ground and making your case. The Usenet sci. groups encourage critical thinking.

Beyond science, social-studies and history classes can keep busy learning about other countries, through the soc.culture newsgroups.

Most of these newsgroups originated as ways for expatriates of a given country to keep in touch with their homeland and its culture. In times of crisis, however, these groups often become places to disseminate information from or into the country and to discuss what is happening. From Afghanistan to Yugoslavia, close to 50 countries are now represented on Usenet.

To see which groups are available, use `l soc.culture. in rn` or `nngrep soc.culture. for nn`.

Several "talk" newsgroups provide additional topical discussions, but teachers should screen them first before recommending them to students. They range from `talk.abortion` and `talk.politics.guns` to `talk.politics.space` and `talk.environment`.

There are also a number of Bitnet discussion groups of potential interest to students and teachers. See Chapter 4 for information on finding and subscribing to Bitnet discussion groups. Some with an educational orientation include:

biopi-l	ksuvm.bitnet	Secondary biology education
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chemed-l	uwf.bitnet	Chemistry education
dts-l	iubvm.bitnet	The Dead Teacher's Society list
phys-l	uwf.bitnet	Discussions for physics teachers
physhare	psuvm.bitnet	Where physics teachers share resources
scimathl	psuvm.bitnet	Science and math education
