

Surfin' the Net

by Todd Michael Lewis

It's a big world outside of your door, and these sites help you explore it.

Here I sit before my monitor, my eyes large and glassy from countless hours cruisin' the Information Superhighway. Some call it browsing, others surfing, but there's no denying that it's a big electronic world out there. Whether you want to learn or play, there's a plethora of sites around the world to suit your tastes, but where are they?

The most difficult aspect of surfing the Net is trying to find things. There are search engines that you may use on the Web, but they don't always find what you are looking for. *Surfin' the Net* is meant to give you a little taste of what can be found on the Web as well as give you directions on how to get there. This list was compiled by all of us Web-crawling guys here at Softdisk. We know we aren't the only Internet surfers, so if you have an interesting Web site that you've seen and would like to share with others, please send it in, and we will list the best here with the rest!

National Geographic Online

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

For decades the National Geographic Society has been one of the top sources for information about the world around us. This site continues their great tradition in digital format.

Views of the Solar System

<http://bang.lanl.gov/solarsys/>

Are we the only planet. No way! In fact, there are several more swinging around the sun just like us. We live in a fascinating solar system, and this site shows it off with information, pictures, animations and sounds. A great site for anyone who ever asked themselves, "How much does a planet weigh?"

Views of the Solar System has been created as an educational tour of the solar system. It contains images and information about the Sun, planets, moons, asteroids, comets and meteoroids found within the solar system. It contains over 220 pages of information, over 950 high-resolution images and animations, and over 880 megabytes of data. The image processing for many of the images was done by the author.

The Whole Frog Project

<http://george.lbl.gov/ITG.hm.pg.docs/Whole.Frog/Whole.Frog.html>

One of the great roles of computers and the internet is as teaching tools. I can remember those forlorn days of my youth, cutting into small amphibians in biology class. Now you can learn about animal anatomy without harming any creatures and smelling like formaldehyde. You can even dissect a virtual frog with your mouse as the scalpel.

Windows of the Universe

<http://www.windows.umich.edu/>

This NASA developed site offers a plethora of information about the universe we live in including the various mythologies based on heavenly bodies.

The Florida Museum of Natural History

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/default.htm>

It's more information about fauna than you can shake a stick at!

Search Engines

The most frustrating aspect of surfin' the internet is actually finding the information you want. With the power of search engines behind you, finding something can be as easy as knowing a single word to search on. Be warned though, searching can sometimes be a challenging walk through a muddied mire of hundreds of hits, but the dilligent usually prevail. Here are some of the best search engines we've found:

Hot Bot

<http://www.hotbot.com>

DejaNews

<http://www.dejanews.com>

Alta-Vista

<http://www.altavista.com>

Lycos

<http://www.lycos.com>

Webcrawler

<http://www.webcrawler.com>

Yahoo

<http://www.yahoo.com>