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THE INTERNET AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this session/roundtable is to provide a forum for discussion of ways to utilize the Internet as a pedagogical tool. The presenters will discuss a number of ideas and invite others to share their ideas. The session will include a brief overview and handouts concerning file types, file transfer, information search engines and others issues which will ease your interaction with the Internet. A list of "Neat Addresses" on the Internet will also be provided.

INTRODUCTION

The widespread availability of powerful information technologies is changing the way that students learn and the way that we teach. Technologies such as email, the Internet and the World Wide Web provide us with the opportunity to create new ways of delivering higher education that overcome some of the shortcomings of our current lecture/discussion approach to teaching. One way to truly experience the global business world is by actually linking to locations and resources worldwide. The Internet, which is composed of more than 2 million host computers connected to over 30,000 individual networks in over 70 countries, provides students with the opportunity to do so. It is time to move our students (and ourselves) beyond the walls of our individual colleges and universities in order to join forces with other institutions, with corporations, and with public policy makers.

Our goal in this session is to provide suggestions on how to utilize the Internet in the classroom. At the time of this proposal, we are beginning to experiment with a number of these ways, and will report the results during the session. We invite others to share their experiences as well.

Ideas to be Discussed

These ideas are simple, yet we believe powerful. Their power rests in the interconnectedness that participants experience while they are communicating across what were once geographic and temporal boundaries to collaboratively realize a shared goal. Some of the uses, which will be discussing are listed below:

1 Create a discussion list for the students in your course or in your department/major.

LISTSERVs, or on-line discussion groups, are an easy way to communicate with your students. They allow your students to communicate with you and with each other, and to continue discussions, which began in class. LISTSERVs work by collecting messages sent by a subscriber and forwarding them to the e-mailbox of all subscribers. Several programs have been written that maintain the original purpose and function of LISTSERV but that work more efficiently with newer systems. For example, on-line discussion groups utilizing LISTPROC and MAJORDOMO.

Most likely, you will not have to know how to set up a list, your computer services department will. They will probably ask you to provide a short name for the group (i.e. MGT 232) and possibly a longer descriptive name (i.e. Topics in Management, Management 232). They may also ask whether or not you want the list to be open to anyone or only to the students at your school. They may ask if you want to moderate the group, that is, receive all the messages sent to the group and then decide which to post for everyone in the group to read. Once the group is set up, they will probably send you a message containing the commands that you may have to use as list owner. These include the ability to "unsubscribe" people, which happen occasionally when people leave their accounts but forget to unsubscribe from the group. These instructions will also include an opportunity to write your own custom welcome message that all new subscribers will receive.

Some of the uses for the LIST include posting the class syllabus, grading policies, articles of interest from the Internet, handouts, or the continuation of a discussion started in class.

An extension of this concept would be to assign individuals or groups of students as administrators for discussion groups. They would be charged with directing the discussion, summarizing and moving the discussion along.

2. Keypals

This activity is similar to snail-mail "pen pal" activities. Student-to-student exchanges or group-to-group exchanges with students at other universities around the world. Pairs of students can discuss course topics, cases, or current issues. This learning structure allows students to learn about each other's cultures through direct contact with students in other countries.

3 . On-line case work

Problem solving is one of the most beneficial educational opportunities that we can offer students. The Internet can be used to extend cooperative problem solving activity around the world. When a case is assigned, students are assigned to inter-collegiate

groups. This requires students to work with group members at different universities. Now, rather than setting up a meeting time in the union, students are forced to communicate with students at different schools, with a back-and-forth type discussion or by accessing the "CHAT" function on the Net. They must, in essence, set up a "virtual group meeting" on the Net.

4. Assign a research project on the Internet.

On-line search engines allow you to search for information in many different ways. Some search titles or headers of documents, others search the documents themselves, and still others search other indexes or directories. Some examples which exist on Netscape, include:

1. *InfoSeek Net Search.. ..*a comprehensive and accurate World Wide Web search engine. You can type your search in plain English or just enter key words or phrases. You can also use special query operators.

2. *WebCrawler....this* engine allows searches by document title and content.

3. *The Lycos Home Page: Hunting WWW Information....served* by Carnegie Mellon University, allows you to search on document titles and content.

4. *Deja News Research Service ....*claims to be the largest Usenet news archive and allows tailored searches including a "create a query" filter, which lets you limit your search by newsgroup, date, or author.

5. *Excite....claims* to search more than one million Web documents and burrow through the past two weeks of Usenet news and classified ads. It also provides NetReviews - sites that journalists have evaluated for content quality - as well as up-to-the-minute news updates.

6. *GUS! (Configurable Unified Search Interface) ....*offered by Nexor U.K., offers a single form to search a large number of different WWW engines for documents, people, software, dictionaries, and more.

7. W3 Search Engines... .served by the University of Geneva, this list of search engines covers a wide variety of topics and subjects but isn't updated very often.

5. Electronic "Specialists" or Mentors

Specialists from universities, business, or government can serve as electronic mentors to students wanting to explore specific topics of study. For instance, our university has a business advisory council, which provides guidance to the College of Business. These "experts" now also serve as mentors or advisors to students via a LISTSERV discussion group.

Suggestions for mentors might include CEO's, company recruiters, local business people, or professors with a particular expertise of interest.

6. Electronic Meetings

Real-time discussions of relevant topics. This would require the use of "CHAT". For a real-time discussion, you would designate a time for the meeting and provide a list of questions/issues to be discussed. This list would be sent to students prior to the meeting so they would have time to think about them. Current events/issues would be interesting, or a current article in Fortune.

Our goal in this session is to stimulate interest in the Internet as a pedagogical tool and to establish a network and contacts for those who are using the Net or want to use the Net in their classes. We would also like to make contacts for discussion groups on other campuses. We view ourselves as novices in this area and we welcome questions, ideas and suggestions from those at all levels of expertise.