



## Worth While Webs

*Each issue of TechKnowLogia will review selected web sites of interest to readers. For the first issue, a range of web sites is presented, responding to the diverse interests of readers. In future issues, the sites will be reviewed on a thematic basis, focusing on more specific topics and professional needs.*

**Selected by Frank Method**  
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**For the distance education community**, and policy makers concerned with initiatives making use of distance education approaches, we refer to the World Bank sponsored *Global Distance Education Net*:

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

**The Global Distance Education Net** (DistEdNet) is a knowledge guide to distance education designed to help clients of the World Bank and others interested in using distance education for human development. The Network consists of a core site located at the World Bank and regional sites in other parts of the world. Information is subdivided into four areas: Teaching and Learning, Technology, Management, and Policy and Programs. The aim of the Teaching and Learning section is to discover how to design a distance learning course and ensure the learner benefits from it. The Technology section deals with communication between teachers and learners by broadcast, recorded, interactive or print technologies. Under Management, methods of organizing distance education, managing budgets, teaching personnel, technology and student administration are examined. Finally, the focus of Policy and Programs is the setup and maintenance of distance education systems at a national or state level or within existing educational institutions. The self-proclaimed distinguishing characteristics of this site are: a focus on distance education; targeting the needs of developing countries; comprehensive, yet selective resources; dynamic nature; multi-lingual (English, French and Spanish).



**For those more concerned with issues of access and learning at the community level**, we suggest UNESCO's *Learning Without Frontiers*:

<http://www.unesco.org/education/lwf/>

**Learning Without Frontiers** (LWF) is a trans-disciplinary, pro-active UNESCO program responding to social and political problems related to learning. A major focus is how individuals and communities access information, communicate and form new knowledge. Arguing that conventional educational systems have done little to address social fragmentation, human frustration, disempowerment, cultural dislocation and technological alienation, LWF seeks to bring new meaning to the concept of life-long learning. Processes of engaging in collaborative, multi-channel and innovative learning are critical for development of the individual and for linking culturally diverse communities. The most recent project "Constructing Open Learning Communities for Lifelong Learning" seeks to build the capacity of community schools and other learning institutions to act as catalysts for change. The aim is not only to improve the quality of current formal and non-formal education, but also to develop alternative learning spaces for the future. Additional links, activities, documents and papers are provided.



**For those interested in development of learning tools**, *The Concord Consortium* offers resources as well as linkages to working groups:

<http://www.concord.org>

**The Concord Consortium** was started in 1994 under the belief that the development and dissemination of dynamic and successful education tools nationwide is the key to harnessing technological resources to extend educational opportunities. The Consortium is dedicated to furthering this revolution worldwide through innovations in hardware, software, learning environments, curricula, and institutions. Among its projects are: The Center for Innovative Learning Technologies (CILT) <http://www.concord.org/projects>; INTEC <http://intec.concord.org> The International NetCourse Teacher Enhancement Coalition, and; the VHS (Virtual High School) <http://vhs.concord.org>. In exchange for contributing teaching time, a school in the VHS collaborative can offer its students NetCourses ranging from advanced academic courses to technical and specialized courses. Schools donate computers, Internet connectivity, and staff time. The VHS grant provides training, software, and technical and administrative support. Quality of teaching is maintained by requiring each teacher to successfully complete The Teachers Learning Conference, a graduate-level NetCourse designed to give participants exposure to the best educational strategies and technologies for NetCourse teaching. The International Center <http://intl.concord.org> works to disseminate ideas and to support and develop Global Networked Courses and International Authoring Teams.



**For those involved with school-level planning** and systems design, *Pathways to School Improvement* provides high quality guidance and tools for team building, assessment and design:

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pathwayg.htm>

**Pathways to School Improvement** was designed by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in conjunction with the Regional Educational Laboratory Network, primarily to help school improvement teams work through the school improvement cycle. Four steps are laid out including, defining problems, understanding critical issues to select improvement strategies, initiating change, and evaluation. The outline is intended to help orient goals toward engaged, meaningful education. Follow the technology link for excellent reviews of critical issues, planning and assessment tools such as *Plugging In* and other resources recommended by the National Research Centers. *Plugging In: Choosing and Using Educational Technology*, 1995, <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/edtalk/toc.htm> introduces knowledge about effective learning and effective technology, and puts it together in a planning framework for educators and policymakers. The premise of these materials is that the only real measure of the effectiveness of technologies and technology-enhanced educational programs is the extent to which they promote and support students' engaged learning and collaboration. After reading about effective learning and technology, educators can follow instructions to actually use the framework to plan technology and technology-enhanced programs that complement learning.



**Teachers and parents** will find a wide range of teacher-initiated materials, modules and shared classroom experience at *TEAMS Distance learning*:

<http://teams.lacoe.edu/>

**TEAMS Distance Learning** brings exemplary learning opportunities to K-8 students, teachers, and parents across the United States through nationally televised satellite broadcasts and the Internet. Learners use instructional technologies to access a combination of the best features of time-dependent (synchronous) video-based instruction along with time-independent (asynchronous) computer access to multimedia and the Internet. TEAMS is the largest interactive distance learning provider for elementary schools, encompassing 21 states, 7500 teachers and 145,000 students. Designed to supplement curriculum while motivating and challenging students, TEAMS includes electronic classrooms, internet projects, and links to resources. Resources span subjects such as Math, Science, History/Social Science, Language/English, Art and music, and Professional Development. TEAMS Distance Learning is one component of the LT&T (LACOE Telecommunications and Technology) division, a service of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).



**Administrators** can find resources as well as assessments of effective methods through *The International Society for Technology in Education*:

<http://www.iste.org/index.html>

**International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)** is the largest teacher-based, nonprofit organization in the field of educational technology. Their mission is to help K–12 classroom teachers and administrators share effective methods for enhancing student learning through the use of new classroom technologies. ISTE facilitates sharing classroom-proven solutions to the challenge of incorporating computers, the Internet, and other new technologies into their schools. The Professional Development link provides the education community with access to high quality professional development and organizational development services to support and improve learning, teaching, and administration in K-12 education and in teacher education. ISTE has released a set of standards for evaluating university educational computing and technology programs in the US and an initial set of Technology Foundation Standards for Students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. This is the first step in a multiyear project aimed at describing the conditions needed to support the use of technology for learning, teaching and institutional management.



**For those with an expanded vision of learning, or just beginning to explore** the new possibilities, *New Horizons for Learning* provides a remarkably rich collection of carefully screened resources and links organized as a multi-story virtual building, with quality resources on each “floor”:

<http://www.newhorizons.org/>

**New Horizons for Learning** is a virtual learning community. Founded in 1980, New Horizons is an international non-profit network of people supporting an expanded vision of learning that identifies and fosters the fullest development of human capacity. They offer resources for learning organizations, translating research and theory into workable solutions for contemporary learning organizations, publishing material, producing conferences, consulting and collaborating on projects and programs. New Horizons has identified, communicated, and helped to implement successful educational strategies through: New Horizons' Online Journal, books and other written materials, networking people and organizations, and eight landmark international conferences. Their role has always been to explore and to help implement ideas that have not yet reached the mainstream, and to work in coordination with other networks and learning communities. Though most sites have separate rooms for special topics and interests, this web site is designed as a multi-story virtual “building,” each floor devoted to a different topic or article of interest. The vast number of topics covered and resources available, and the excellent quality control on materials and links make this site rather comprehensive.



**Finally, for those faced with responding quickly in countries and communities in crisis,** *The GINIE Project* provides on-line real-time professional support and links to resources for educators and others on the ground:

<http://ginie.sched.pitt.edu/index.html>

**The Global Information Networks In Education (GINIE) Project** focuses on improving educational quality in nations in crisis and transition to help build normalcy, continuity and momentum in local communities. GINIE, based at the University of Pittsburgh, with support through UNESCO, USAID and other international organizations, works through internet-centered professional development networks to provide educators working in crisis and post-crisis contexts rapid access to high quality knowledge and expertise, offering a virtual community for educational renovation and innovation. Using internet based technologies, GINIE helps both to facilitate short-term responses and to support development of long term professional networks among education policymakers, donors and investors, researchers and practitioners. Knowledge and expertise is organized according to what works in a) policy, planning evaluations, b) teaching and learning, c) access, equity and diversity, and d) work force educational and community economic development. GINIE has an online database a capacity for on-line conferencing, links to partners and associate sites. It also hosts the on-line reporting for the Emergency Education network of NGOs and links to related programs such as UNESCO's Emergency Education Program

<http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/emergency/> .