

GETTING CONNECTED: INTERNET IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM [inter2]

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Current materials, worldly views, enlarging collections, improving communication and research skills, along with computer and library skills are all feasible reasons why school libraries should be connected to the Internet. The library is the center for information diffusion where all disciplines meet. It seems only natural for such an informational tool as the Internet to be located there. Yet, what happens when the anxiety rises and librarians are at a loss? What is the next move? With all the articles available it is hard to find specific answers.

Current Internet users are addressing everyday questions and problems posed by educators by accessing sites such as K12NET, KIDSNET, FrEdMail, and the LM_NET. Each discipline area has myriad sources. Governmental data, science experiments, full text classics, current health issues, music lyrics and the latest geographical facts are everyday finds just waiting to be integrated into education. Cooperative learning tasks occur between children in classrooms across the world from each other. Peer teaching is natural as first time users learn from the more experienced. "Keypals" have replaced pen pals and the world becomes accessible to anyone who is interested. As a gateway to further information this bibliography is a pointer in the right direction.

During the course of the research for the "best" articles, many concerns arose. Funding, equitable access, pornographic materials, staff training and information overload are all pressing issues. Funding may not only be buying computers but include rewiring and space. Governmental and administrative support for equitable access is not easy. The technical support is expensive and training of current staff is not always possible. What about pornographic materials and too much information? All of these issues are addressed in the chosen articles.

It is important to continually improve the status of the school library media specialist and to do this taking a leadership role in information technology is essential. It is time to bring the library media center into the 21st century. The selected articles will be of help.

Barron, Daniel D. "School Library Media Specialists and the Internet: Road Kill or Road Warriors?" **School Library Media Activities Monthly**, (May 1994) :48-50.

While useful hints about access and resources are discussed in this article, the main focus is upon the reasons why school library media specialists should be using the Internet. Barron persuasively contends that librarians are ideally situated to "bridge the gap between teckies and technophobes, to link people with the information they need." In his view, hesitancy about using the Internet will lead to becoming "Road Kill" on the Information Superhighway. They could become "Road Warriors" instead by asserting themselves as information professionals while drawing upon their skills with technology and people, and their knowledge of the curriculum. Five sources for further reading are included.

Dyrli, Odvard Egil. "Riding the Internet Schoolbus: Places to Visit and Things to Do." **Technology and Learning**. (October 1994): 32-40.

This article gives references to pertinent sites on the "Net" for most educational needs. "What do we do once we get there?" are the words of the author and many teachers as well. All sites mentioned are verified and full of helpful ideas for any subject. From e-mailing the White House, doing research, being published and electronic expeditions, this article is for anyone who is logged on but at a loss for where to go next.

Eisenberg, Michael B. and Donald P. Ely. "Plugging into the 'Net'." **Emergency Librarian**. (November-December 1993) :8-16.

The authors present information on the educational benefits and uses of computer networks in K-12 classrooms. Basic information for start-up, a glossary and a variety of education related networks are discussed in the article. Two helpful tables are included: the first, an outline of computer network uses by educational purpose and related network, e.g. for the electronic publishing of students' products, the network K12NET is mentioned. The second describes four commercial networks which have educational resources. This is a useful article for describing some of the basic networks such as K12NET, FrEdMail, KIDSNET -- as well as presenting actual classroom applications. In the section regarding the future, the authors delve into the importance of networks, especially in regard to educational reform. Contains twenty two references.

Eisenberg, Michael and Peter Milbury. "The Internet and Library Media Programs: The Technology is Now!" In **Libraries and the Internet/NREN: Perspectives, Issues and Challenges**, by Charles R. McClure, William E. Moen, and Joe Ryan. 199-220. Westport: Mecklermedia, 1994. ISBN 0-88736-824-7

Chapter five of this book specifically describes how library media specialists currently use the Internet to meet the information needs of their school communities. Eisenberg and Millbury provide examples from LM_NET subscribers: members of the listserve for school library media specialists. The authors go on to explore key concerns and issues related to the future use of the Internet in schools. According to the authors, media specialists must often be leaders in technology issues. They are in a position to see the benefits the Internet offers for cooperative learning, increased status for media programs, and especially for fulfilling the mission of the school library.

Engle, Mary E., Marilyn Lutz, Williams W. Jones, Jr., and Genevieve Engle. **Internet Connections: A Librarian's Guide to Dial-up Access and Use.** Chicago: American Library Association, 1994. 166p. \$ 22.00. LC93-17842 ISBN 0-8389-7677-8.

The title of this book is a good summary in itself. Any librarian whether a newcomer to the net or a veteran should have a copy of this book. It does a wonderful job of explaining the basics and delving into gems not always easily accessed. It will grow with the user and is a wonderful reference for questions. The index is easy to read and the bibliographies of specific subjects are very useful for further reading. A "must" for all librarians.

Flanders, Bruce. "A Delicate Balance." **School Library Journal.** (October 1994) :32-35.

Flanders covers the touchy subject of pornographic materials on the Internet and the school's role of responsibility. After reading the article, anyone previously worried about the topic instantly feels relieved there are possible solutions out there besides pulling the plug or constant supervision. Moving responsibility to the parent in requiring permission slips before use is a growing and feasible answer. Confidence in the freedom and beauty of the information age is required to keep the Internet as an educational tool.

Kollasch, Matthew. "Modem Operandi." **Wilson Library Bulletin,** 67, no. 9, 65-66.

Using LM_NET, Mr. Kollasch posted several questions regarding use of the Internet by school library media specialists. The article presents replies to his questions on gaining access, time management, training of students and staff, and use of the Internet in specific curriculum areas. Opinions about LM_NET and whether or not the Internet is a crucial service were also given. Several pieces of very practical advice were offered, as well as one resource - CERF n' Safari Guide, an Internet user's manual of classroom applications for K-12 teachers and students.

Truett, Carol. "The Internet: What's in it for me?" **The Computing Teacher** 22 (November 1994): 66-68.

Truett's upbeat article begins with an explanation of why school media specialists should comply with the precepts of Information Power and provide access to electronic resources outside of the media center. Included in her arguments are: timeliness of materials, opportunities for curriculum integration, communication with other education professionals throughout the world, access to other libraries, facilitation of the teaching of library and computer skills, and the opportunity to actively participate in the Information Age. Truett also includes easily understood definitions of Internet-related terms. Dr. Truett concludes her article with information on how to hook up to the Internet. In this section, she tells what software is needed for the hookup as well as what books would be useful once a librarian is actually connected to the system. Five references included.

West, Peter. "Logged on for Learning." **Education Week** 16 (January 11, 1995): 1-28.

This special report was created in order to provide educators with straightforward and non technical information about key technology issues. The information was intended to be helpful to those involved in planning services for the information age. The first issue concerns funding for access to the Internet. Unfortunately, the author points out that, in most instances, no credible plans for connecting schools to the Internet currently exist. Other issues addressed in this report include available software as well as user-friendly computers of the future.