



# Eye on *the Web*

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

## Back to School: Sites Serving Students and Teachers

For some, fall is a time of harvest, thanksgiving and reflection following the heat and energy of summer. For more than two million Ontario K-12 students, however, fall marks a return to classrooms and libraries. This column will focus on Web-based resources of use to K-12 students and the librarians that will be working hard to help them both survive and succeed in the 2005/06 school year.

### Portals

#### Canada's SchoolNet

[www.schoolnet.ca/](http://www.schoolnet.ca/)

#### Learning Resources

[www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/resources/](http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/resources/)

Canada's SchoolNet is the product of an Industry Canada partnership with other federal departments, provincial education ministries, education and library associations (including OLA), and an impressive list of corporations. Their collective goal is to promote the effective use of information and communications technologies in learning. This initiative has evolved to include a comprehensive e-learning portal for Canadian students and educators. The *Learning Resources* section, linked from the top of the main page, provides access to over 7,000 educational Web-based resources, almost 3,000 of which are identified as being relevant to K-12 students and educators.

Browsing these resources is an option but, given its girth, may induce a state of frustration for some users. The simple search function defaults to the Boolean OR but supports both AND statements and phrase searching through the use of quotation marks. The advanced search is definitely the recommended course of action, as it includes both keyword search options and an extensive list of search limiters. Users have the opportunity to limit by curriculum area, age/grade range, jurisdiction (e.g., Ontario), information type (e.g., games, lesson plans), availability (e.g., free, commercial), and provincial learning outcomes.

While most resources are obviously educational in nature, it is not immediately clear why others are included. For example, the Canada Post site has merited an entry but, when you follow the link from SchoolNet, you are left on your own to meander until stumbling upon the *Postal Planet*, a section of the Canada Post Web site dedicated to educational activities and lesson guides. For the record, *Postal Planet* is linked near the bottom of a list of options under the shortcut pull-down menu. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the *Postal Planet* in the Canada Post record on the SchoolNet site.

Finally, and like most Web portals, numerous dead links will be found -- although I do hope someone has updated the links to the "National Library of Canada" and "National Archives of Canada" before this column hits the press!

### Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/)

#### Students

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/)

#### Parents

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/)

#### Teachers

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/)

The Ontario Ministry of Education has revamped and relaunched their Web-site. It is now organized by audience, with separate entry points for teachers, parents, and students.

The Students portal headings are: General Info; Getting Great Grades; Cool Tools; High School 101; Life Beyond School. Highlights of this section include links to exemplars (samples of student work with grading comments from teachers), preparatory student guides for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), links to "cool" Web-based educational resources (don't

miss the federal “index of Web sites” for grade 9-12 students), detailed information about the secondary school program, and practical guides for finding both seasonal and full time employment opportunities.

The Parents portal headings are: General Information; What’s My Child Expected to Learn?; How Can I Help?; Special Education; Focus on Literacy and Numeracy; Safe, Healthy Schools; Get Involved. These links provide access to directories, curriculum guides, yet more links to Web-based educational resources, information about volunteer opportunities, as well as online publications such as, “Helping Your Child Learn to Read” and “Helping Your Child Learn Math.”

Finally, the Teachers portal headings are: General Information; Curriculum; Teaching Tools; The Teaching Profession; Literacy and

Numeracy; Safe, Health Schools; Special Education. As expected, this section provides access to practical tools including curriculum documents and links to Web-based educational resources.

Other professional resources in this section include detailed information for aspiring teachers and supportive programs for practicing teachers. Note that some portions of this Web-site are similar if not identical to those in the Parents section; e.g., Special Education, Literacy and Numeracy.

### ***Gems on the Web: Three Exemplary Web-Based Educational Resources***

The portals noted above provide access to a plethora of Web-based educational resources. Three A+ examples are summarized below.

## **Elementary Grades**

### **Campsite 24 for Kids (grades 2-6)**

[www.campsite24.ca/](http://www.campsite24.ca/)

Ontario Parks, a branch within the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, has partnered with The Pepsi Bottling Group and Lucid3D Inc. to create a highly interactive tool that introduces elementary students to Ontario’s parks, plants and wildlife. A virtual frog leads students through the lessons and virtual library (in the Visitor Centre), while teachers are prompted by an owl that provides access to lesson plans, information about planning park visits, and resources for parents. Although wonderfully executed, this site might prove painful for those with slow Internet connections.

## **Secondary Grades**

### **Statistics Canada Learning Resources**

[www.statcan.ca/english/edu/index.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/edu/index.htm)

The Learning Resources section of the Statistics Canada Web-site assists users who want to learn

about and use Canadian federal, provincial and municipal statistical information. There are three main entry points: Students, Teachers, Post-secondary. Created to assist with the completion of homework assignments, the Students section allows users to browse through free articles and data by subject. The Teachers section provides access to lesson plans and teacher’s kits. There’s even a Learning Resources Bulletin to help teachers stay informed of changes to the site. Don’t miss the cumulative list of all learning resources linked from the main page, noted above.

## **Something for Everyone**

### **United Nations Cyber School Bus**

[/www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/index.asp](http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/index.asp)

Like most UN Web sites, the main page for the Cyber School Bus pummels the user with competing blocks of information. Student resources are primarily for secondary students and, for the most part, linked on the left side of the page. InfoNation and Country at a Glance provide older students with basic country and city-level information while the Quizzes and Games are geared to younger students. Curriculum links cover all grade levels and are found on the right side of the page. These lesson plans cover many important issues including peace, poverty, world hunger, human rights, and discrimination. Do not miss the “Other UN Educational Web-Sites” link from the “more curriculum” section – the IMF, UNICEF, UNEP (Environmental Protection), UNCHR (Human Rights), and UNESCO all provide access to Web-based educational resources relevant to their mandates.

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