

250 THINGS

Homeschoolers Can Do on the Internet

A Guide to
Fun, Facts, and Friends

TAMRA B. ORR

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HOMESCHOOLERS
CAN DO ON THE
INTERNET**

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INTRODUCTION

When television was first invented, there were many people who scoffed at it and predicted that it was simply another trend that was sure to fade quickly. Today, of course, it's pretty obvious that the scoffers were wrong, because there are more televisions in homes than there are indoor toilets. Those same people, if they hadn't learned their lesson the first time, might have made the same prediction when personal home computers started becoming popular a few decades ago. Ha! They might well have thought. Another fad; it will go the way of poodle skirts and pet rocks. (Never heard of those? Go check in with your parents or grandparents—they can tell you.) Again, these people would have been wrong. Today, according to CyberAtlas, the company that monitors what is happening on the Internet, 143 million Americans use computers on a regular basis and two million new users start up every *month*. Who are the primary users of the Internet? You guessed it—children and teenagers. Statistics show that an incredible ninety percent of you (between ages five and seventeen) are online regularly, especially as you reach the upper teen years.

Whether people want to admit it or not, computers are here to stay and in many ways, that's a great thing. As you will see in this book, computers are your doorway to finding new friends, learning fascinating new

information, and just having a good time. However, they are not your only doorway, or even the best doorway. You can make friends, discover facts, and have fun all without going near a computer. It's like eating pumpkin pie; it's great fun but there are lots of other desserts out there (like chocolate chip cookies!) so why restrict yourself to just one? If you find yourself spending hours and hours in front of the computer screen, ignoring invitations to go on a picnic with your family or join in a basketball game with the neighbors or ride to the library to get some new books, something is wrong. The computer is a tool, and it is one that needs to be used carefully and with restriction.

HOMESCHOOLERS AND THE INTERNET

Of course, another so-called fad that you know quite well is homeschooling. Once thought to be something that blossomed from the 1970s flower children, it is now a firmly established educational alternative. Each year, more and more families are making the same decision yours did and bringing education and learning back to the home front. When homeschooling and computers come together, great things can happen. With the time and freedom that home education brings, you can do some in-depth exploring on the Internet. It can help with reports, link you to other homeschoolers all over the world and even entertain you now and then. What a wonderful combination!

Check in with your parents and make sure it is okay to use the Internet for your classes and assignment. You will find lessons there, virtual field trips, book excerpts and much, much more. Keep one important thing in mind as you look for information; *don't always believe what you read*. Websites are not always honest or factual; just because something turns up on the screen, doesn't make it true. You might look up one site and find a fact, then go to another site on the same topic and find something that contradicts the fact you just found. Stick with solid sources when you research; statistics from the CIA World Factbook, for example, are going to be much more reliable than ones you find on www.petesbestguesses.com.

THE LAYOUT OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is to show you the incredible things you can do on the Internet. The first chapter tells you the safety stuff: you've probably heard it all before but it's something that deserves repeating. In fact, if you skip it and proceed right to the second chapter, the Internet police may just have to add your name to their list of radicals and troublemakers! The chapter will also talk about the primary search engines you can use to find web sites. This book assumes (you didn't know a book could assume anything, did you?) that you already have basic computer knowledge and that you know how to navigate on the Web. If you don't, grab a Computer Basics 101 book before you go any further. It will make reading this one much easier. Another option: go online and check out the resources at: www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/explore/computers4kids.htm. It's a site specifically for kids who want to learn more about how to use the different elements of their home computers.

Chapters 2 through 4 follow the same basic pattern. They will list a number of web sites, along with descriptions of what each site offers. Please note that when this book went to the printing press, these sites were active, but as you are probably already aware, web sites come and go at a rapid rate, so some might be gone or changed. The ones included here are more reliable and, hopefully, will still be functioning when you look them up.

Chapter 2 is specifically about how to have fun on the Internet. It is all about fun activities, from games with players across the globe, to how to make things in your own room. Chapter 3 is the serious stuff—the educational material to help with your homeschool curriculum or just to find out the answer to a question. Chapter 4 is all about how to meet people and make friends online. Keep in mind that some of the sites blend; you can learn something while you are having fun and meet others in the process.

As you walk through the Internet doorway, be prepared to enjoy yourself. Stay safe there and don't hang around too long, but make the most of the time you are there exploring the fascinating World Wide Web.

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LEARNING BASICS: STAYING SAFE AND SURFING SMART

Computers are wonderful things but they are a little like automobiles. They can take you places, help you spend time with friends, and explore the world, but they can also be dangerous. If you don't follow the traffic laws while you are behind the wheel, you could have an accident. If you don't follow the rules of cyber-safety when you are online, you could run into trouble. And, just as there are some mighty dangerous drivers behind the wheels of some of the vehicles on the road, there are some equally dangerous people sitting at computer keyboards.

One of the best things about a computer is that it lets you reach and meet people from all over the globe. You can go into a chat room and talk about music to someone on the other side of the planet as easily as in the house next door. When you are talking to friends you know personally, this isn't a problem. What can be a problem are the people who lie about who they are and what they want. They may want to sell you something; they may want to talk about inappropriate things with you; they may want to argue with you; they may want more information about you than they need to know; they may try to lead you to websites that have restricted or sexual adult material on them. Your parents might have some kind of filter in place to stop that from happening, but they may not. Plus, some people find ways to get around filters.

Like the driver who merges into the straight lane and then forgets to turn off his turn signal, many of these people are not dangerous; just annoying. However, now and then, a truly threatening person or situation can come up, and you need to know how to handle it. Take a few minutes to study your Internet safety manual below and don't forget to wear your safety belt. It's time to hit the information highway!

RULES OF THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Ok—here they are; these are the basic rules that will keep you safe on the road. Memorize them, because you never know when a pop quiz might just pop up!

- (1) Never give out personal information on the Internet. Don't tell others where you live or go to school. Don't tell them personal details about your family. You may think they are the only ones reading that information, but things put on the Internet are often read by more people than you would ever imagine.
- (2) Never agree to meet someone you met online without talking to your parents about it first. Remember, just because this person says he is your age and likes the same groups you do, doesn't mean he isn't a 55-year-old axe murderer out on parole.
- (3) Log off immediately if you see something that is frightening or upsetting. Be sure and tell your parents about it right away also.
- (4) Protect any of your passwords. Sharing them with people means they can now use your password to do whatever they want to on the site—and that can lead to trouble. Don't share your screen name or user ID either.
- (5) Never send pictures of yourself or your family without talking to your parents first. Sending a picture of your birthday party to Aunt Meg in Seattle is fine; sending that same picture to a stranger isn't.
- (6) Never buy anything or subscribe to a paying site on the Internet without your parent's permission. There are a lot of scams on the Internet; don't get caught falling for one and having to



FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT SAFETY

Cyber Safety is one important topic; so if you want to know more than what is here, check out the following:

www.safekids.com

www.cyberangels.com

www.yahooligans.com/docs/safety

www.nypl.org/branch/safety.html

www.mcgruff-safe-kids.com

www.kidshield.com

explain to your parents where that credit card charge came from.

- (7) Ask your parent's permission to go into a chat room. You and your mom and dad can set up which chat rooms are okay and which ones are not.
- (8) Talk over the rules of the Internet with your parents. Find out how they feel about you using it and what restrictions and rules they want you to follow.
- (9) Look at a website's privacy policy. This should tell you what information the site collects and what it does with it.

There! That wasn't so bad, was it? The rules are simple and like most rules, they are there to keep you safe.

READY, GET SET, CONNECT!

You've read the manual, the key is in the ignition and you are ready to go down that information highway. For many of you, getting online and getting involved is as familiar as brushing your teeth. You've been doing

it for so long that you are positive you could do it in your sleep. However, for those who aren't so familiar with it, here are just a few basic tips to keep in mind:

- Find the search engine that you like the best and go to that site. (A search engine is like your own personal taxi driver for the whole World Wide Web; it asks where you want to go and you tell it. Most of the time you get there; occasionally there are some weird detours.) Keeping strictly to the safe search engines will help eliminate many potential risks. Take a look at the sidebar at the end of the chapter for good places to start.
- Go to the search box and type in what you are looking for. Be as specific as possible. Spelling is important here; one letter off can lead you a whole different direction. To make sure you just get what applies to your request, put pluses (+) between the words and put it all in quotation marks (“ ”). This narrows down your responses nicely. If you want a computer game that involves Pokémon, for example, put `Pokemon+computer+game` in the search box. Try other combinations too like `Pokemon+online+games`, or `Pokemon+web+games`. If you are looking up information on Abraham Lincoln for a report, be specific in your search; there's a lot out there about him. Try `Abraham+Lincoln+slavery` or `Abraham+Lincoln+election`, etc. Try to make your word search at least three words long so that what you get back is truly information that will be helpful. Don't bother putting in little words like *a*, *an*, *the*, *or*, and *and*; they are usually ignored in a search. If your search results are several hundred thousand, you know you need to narrow things down. Type your words/phrase in all small letters for a general search; using capitals will create a more exact match.
- Some sites will ask you to register before you use them. First, make sure there is no money involved. Second, pick a password that will be easy for you to remember. Try using the same one for each website you log on to; it's easier to remember if you don't change it each time.
- Most websites feature a Help section. Take a look at it for the particular clues and suggestions it has for that specific site.
- Use more than one search engine. Even if one doesn't find the results you want, another just might. You might also want to learn

to use *megasearch* and *metasearch* engines. A megasearch engine is usually a site where you can choose several different search engines, but you have to search them individually. A metasearch, on the other hand, is a site that allows you to look for something on a number of different search engines all at the same time. Two examples are www.dogpile.com and www.savvysearch.com, but beware: neither is filtered or designed for kids.

- When you type in your search words and have the results, most websites will rank them in order of how much they supposedly match your request. In other words, the first ones on the list should be the most helpful. However, sometimes what you are looking for is further down the list, so don't just ignore those at the bottom.
- A few basic terms to know are: ISP—Internet Service Provider (where your internet service comes from); Hyperlink—a connection between the site you are on and one that is related. Click on it and you will go right to it. Click back on the upper left tool bar and you will return to the original site; and URL—Uniform Resource Locator. Every single document on the web has its own unique address and that is its URL.
- If you've ever been told to take your hat off at a meal or to keep your elbows off the table, you know that these are rules of etiquette. When using the web, there are rules of *netiquette*. The Computer Ethics Institute established them, and they are good guidelines for both kids and adults.

The Ten Commandments for Computer Ethics

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people's computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people's files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not use or copy software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people's computer resources without authorization.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people's intellectual output.

9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you write.
10. Thou shalt use a computer in ways that show consideration and respect.

Hop on the Web and see where it takes you. There are over three hundred million websites out there to choose from, so pack a lunch! Fun, facts, and friends are out there just waiting for you!

A BAKER'S DOZEN OF PLACES TO START YOUR SEARCH

These websites are especially designed to help people your age and are either monitored or set up to keep away the sites and information that you don't want.

www.yahooligans.com (Kids Yahoo site)

www.ajkids.com (Ask Jeeves site for kids)

www.cleansearch.com/clean-search-index.html (filtered website)

sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick/ (web search by librarians)

cybersleuth-kids.com/ (for kids of all ages)

www.ithaki.net/kids/ (a metasearch engine)

familyfriendlysearch.com/ (also a metasearch engine)

www.route616.com/ (CyberPatrol's cyber guide)

www.kidsofamerica.com/Online1.htm (created by Mothers of America)

www.a1source.com/ (Quality Search Engine logo)

www.super-kids.com/ (The Super-Cool, Super Guide)

www.beritsbest.com/search/ (Berit's Best Sites for Kids)

www.ivyjoy.com/rayne/kidssearch.html

HAVING FUN: PLAYING GAMES AND SURFING SPORTS

The Internet is the place for you to do everything from playing card games and educational games to playing chess with people around the world. It's also the place where you can keep up with your favorite sport and teams or find out who is in the latest movie and how it's doing in the theaters. Here is just a sampling of what is out there waiting for you.

SPORTS

msnet.com

This is the official site for Major League Soccer (MLS). It features everything for soccer fans of all ages including sports headlines, the history of MLS, and a page just for Youth Soccer. In addition to this, you can sign up for "90 Minutes," the weekly e-mail newsletter of the MLS (free). The site has ten teams listed on it (including Los Angeles Galaxy, the New England Revolutions, and the Kansas City Wizards) with their stats, schedule, roster, and much more to click on and find out more.



OTHER SPORTS SITES

msn.espn.go.com/main.html—The website for cable stations of ESPN
www.tsn.ca—The website for Canadian sports
www.wintercream.com—The site for snowboarding
www.webswim.com—The site for swimming fans
www.foosball.com—Yep, it's a site dedicated to foosball!
www.frisbee.com—The site for freestyle Frisbee fans
www.rollerblade.com—From the folks who brought you the skates in the first place!

www.infosprts.com

This is the longest running youth sports website on the Internet. While it does require a fee (\$10–\$15) to enroll in their specialized services, they still offer free information and articles on all kinds of sports, including football, baseball, basketball, soccer, and hockey. Parents of kids in sports can find a lot of helpful information here also.

www.sikids.com

This site is sponsored by Sports Illustrated. It features news, scoreboards, team pages and much more. The Games section has a number of free games to play including Ice Racer (bobsledding), Playground Bomba (basketball), Power Hitter (baseball) and Rooftop Skater (skateboarding).

ENTERTAINMENT

www.movieweb.com

This website features movie reviews, entertainment news, trivia games and a section called Kid's Korner, which has reviews of movies

often written by kids. It details their appropriateness for the different ages also.

www.rockhall.com

This is the official site for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. It shows their permanent collections, this day in rock and roll history, rock timelines, list of best all-time rock songs and rock star biographies. It's fun to browse through, and if you are planning to make a trip there, it gives you lots of information and tips.

www.boxoffice.com

This is another movie site that can provide a ton of information for the film lover. Along with reviews of current movies, it has reviews in the archives of movies made between 1995 and 1998 and a section of Classical Movie Reviews. Daily entertainment news is on the site and it features in-depth interviews with stars.

If you want to have fun on sites that tie in with some of your favorite TV programs, check out www.cartoonnetwork.com, www.nick.com, www.carmensandiego.com/, <http://www.billnye.com/>, and www.foxkids.com.

FUN AND GAMES

www.cheatingplanet.com/

If you like to play different kinds of video games on Game Boy, Dreamcast, Nintendo, and the like, this is the place to check out for tricks and tips on how to play the games better.

members.macconnect.com/users/k/kidnaround/

This site is the Kid'n Around E-zine and it has something to appeal to almost anyone. Categories include What's Hot (hot new sites for kids), Books to Read, Sports, and Just for Fun, with lots of games and fun sites.

It has several sections that are completely written by kids like Chew on This and Speak Out!

www.bonus.com

This site has it all. It's colorful and bright and has a little something for everyone. Choose from Sports: games from surfing to extreme sports to golf to pool hall (pool, darts, skittles, bowling); Games (alien, word, animals, mazes, and much more); Brains (educational fun stuff like history, Earth, dinosaurs, homework help, and under the sea); and Family (recipes, safety, arts and crafts, money, and more). Registration is free and choices are almost endless.

www.thecase.com, www.kidsloveamystery.com and kids.mysterynet.com

If you love mysteries, these sites are perfect for you. Each one profiles mystery authors and some feature a sleuth timeline, mini mysteries to read and solve, longer mysteries to read online, and book, television and movie reviews. You can sign up for a monthly email mystery too. Click on the kids' section off "the case" site or go to the URL listed above for a site designed for the younger mystery fan. It includes magic tricks, solve it yourself mysteries, and many mysteries written by kids themselves. The Kids Love a Mystery site is a literary outreach of Mystery Writers of America and MysteryNet.com. Its main purpose is to bring together authors who write for the juvenile and young adult markets with children, parents, and teachers to celebrate mysteries. If you like writing mysteries as much or more than reading them, check out the monthly contest at www.candlelightstories.com/D001/Mystery.asp.

www.playsite.com

This site is for you if you like to play games with people all over the world. It is all free and there are commonly four thousand players online at the same time. The divisions are: Board Games (including backgammon, chess, checkers, Battleship, and Monopoly); Arcade Games (including Missile Command, Red Baron, Gravitar, and Centipede); Word

Games (including Cascade and Scrabble), and Card Games (including bridge, euchre, cribbage, and gin). There are also Casino Games on here, so check with your parents before hitting this site.

www.dinotopia.com and www.visitdinotopia.com

If you are a fan of the book and/or TV series about the mythical land of Dinotopia, this is the place to go. As the official site, it features a virtual tour, the code of the land, a message board for fans, news about the series, and interviews with authors. The pull-down menu on the home page offers everything from puzzles to contests to trivia. For more information, check out the second site listed above. It has impressive graphics and features lots of information about the TV mini-series including cast, trailer, crew, and the making of the show.

www.itsyourturn.com

This free site allows you to play up to forty different games online with others around the world. You have to sign in but there's no fee and since it is a turn-based game, you can play without time limits.

www.lego.com

Love to build and create with Legos? Check out this site, which features everything a Lego Lover wants—over thirty different games (a free registration is required), information on their national club, and a section on building tips, questions, and answers and much more.

scholastic.com/ispy/index.asp

Like to play I Spy? Now you can do it online at this site. Along with that, you will find games like Roaming Robot Power Punchout, Megamix Maker (Animorphs), Interactive Weather Maker, and Wizard Challenge (Harry Potter). You can create your own cards at this site, join the Kid's Council, read the latest news headlines, and in Book Central, you can read about upcoming books and even write your own book review. Don't forget to check out Express Yourself; a place to make your

own comic, create your own personal I Spy game, or write to Magic School Bus.

www.spacekids.com/freestuff/

Have a set of 3-D glasses sitting around? If you do, go to this site and check out the images you can see. If you don't, ask your parents for permission to send to the site for a free pair. Information is on the home page.

etch-a-sketch.com

If you like doing pictures on your Etch-a-Sketch at home, you are in for a treat on their site. You can learn tips and tricks on how to do better pictures and then go to their art gallery to see the incredible things some people have done already. You can also access coloring pages, join the club, buy products, and read over the FAQs.

www.crayon.net

Here's the place where you can create your very own newspaper, complete with links and headlines from whatever news sites you choose. It's fun and yep, it's all free.

www.puzzlemaker.com/

Do you enjoy puzzles? This is the site for you. Sponsored by the Discovery Channel, you can create all kinds of games and puzzles here, from mazes and word searches to cryptograms and crosscross puzzles. You can print them out and even save them online for the next time.

www.dreamdoctor.com/teen/

This is the place to go if you have had a dream so weird that you can't imagine what it meant. You can look in the online dream dictionary to see what things symbolize or even submit your dream to the site for a return analysis (free). It includes factual information on dreaming for reports, as well as recommended reading lists and a Dream Quiz.

www.earthcamforkids.com/

This site is wonderful—and awful. Supposedly, you can click on a variety of categories from Amazing Animals or Adventures to Out of this World and Weird-o-Rama and see shots from live cameras all over the world. It would be great—if they all worked. Many don't seem to be able to load properly. However, when you get one—like live shots of animals, updated every one to fifteen minutes, it is fun. Go there when you have some time and patience.

disney.go.com/park/homepage/today/flash/index.html

From the people who bring you Disneyland and Disneyworld comes this colorful site full of fun online games—and of course, an offer to purchase their extra game program, Disney Blast. The free games and other activities on this site are great fun.

www.ucomics.com/calvinandhobbes/

Many homeschoolers are true Calvin and Hobbes fans. Calvin's attitude toward public education and his boundless imagination appeal to many. Although the cartoon is sadly no longer published, you can find the archives at this site. Plan to giggle. If you are also a fan of Foxtrot comics, check out the illustrator's own website at homepage.mac.com/billamend/. If you (or your parents) are Archie comic book fans, check out all the fun at www.archiecomics.com/.

www.allmixedup.com/

Here's a place to go if you enjoy the classic, old-fashioned games. It includes chess, tic tac toe, Othello, solitaire, dice, hangman and much more.

www.head-crash.com/games.html

This site features some familiar games that can be played on the Web. Choices include Web Battleship, Web Minesweeper, Web Reversi and Web Maze.

scholastic.com/animorphs/index.htm

Are you an Animorphs fan? Check out this site to play games, find out information about characters and read sample chapters from books. That's only the beginning!

www.equipped.org/kidsrvl.htm

It's time to play survivor on the Internet! Here's a place to find out how you can survive in all kinds of situations, the equipment you need, and lots more.

www.pilkey.com/

No matter your age, this is a fun site. As creator of the Dragon series for young readers and the incredible Captain Underwear series, this site offers jokes, riddles, games, and much more. Beware of the warning on the site, however, which reads: "This web site contains scenes and material which may be considered too silly for grown-ups, small animals, and many varieties of houseplants. If you are a grown-up, a small animal, or a houseplant, we strongly urge you to seek the permission of a kid before browsing this site."

www.ripleys.com/ripleyintro.html

This is the official site for *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* It has intense graphics, fascinating collections, videos to watch, and lots more. There is an advisory that this isn't meant for small children.

www.worldkids.net/jaguar/

Attention *Star Trek* fans. Check out the largest kids' *Star Trek* site on the web, created by a teenager named Danny. It is designed to be like a fictitious starship called the Jaguar. Anyone under eighteen can join the crew and participate in adventures through space. It is the flagship of the United Federation of Kids and their mission is "to boldly go where no kid has gone before."

More fun for game fans can be found at the official Pokémon site: <http://www.pokemon.com/> and the Nintendo site: www.nintendo.com/index.jsp

www.kidsdomain.com/kids/contests.html

Do you like to enter contests? Try out this site for links to some of the most fun contests out on the Net. You'll find some interesting contests at www.huronline.com/kids.htm. Yahoo offers quite a few at www.yahooligans.com/arts and [entertainment/Contests/](http://www.yahooligans.com/entertainment/Contests/). If you like to write poetry or just want to give it a try, check out www.gigglepoetry.com/contests.html. Remember, though—always check with your parents first before entering a contest of any kind.

CRAFTS

Do you enjoy making things, either for yourself or for gifts? Here are some great sites to check out for ideas, patterns, and tips.

freakidscrafts.com/

With over 50 categories to choose from, you are sure to find something you like here. Choices range from beads to Bible, Pokémon to puppets, and everything in between. Click on any of them and you are led to even more selections; there are hundreds of possibilities here. Check out these sites too: www.dltk-kids.com/; www.geocities.com/Athens/Sparta/4692/craftsites1.html; www.vistek.com/newhome/cbf1kb/kidsbase.html; and www.nhptv.org/kn/vs/artlkd2.htm.

FOR TEENS

These sites are geared specifically to teens, and you know what that means—check it out anyway and see if it's of interest or if you want to wait a few more years before it will be relevant.

www.ypp.net; www.writes.org and www.teenink.com

YPP is the Young People's Press online and it is the place to go to get your nonfiction published (if you are between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four). Opinions and news stories are welcomed. Writes, on the other hand, is where you want to take your poetry, prose, and stories to be published. They offer writing tips and interviews with authors. TeenInk is the same place that produces the popular TeenInk books, and it wants fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Check them out!

www.teenreads.com

If you love to read and like suggestions on what's good—and what isn't—check out this site, which lists new young adult titles, as well as adult titles that are deemed appropriate for teens to read. It lets you write reviews and sound off about a book and also features interviews with authors.

www.motivateus.com/tquotes.html

This small site is for teens to read motivational and inspirational quotes for, about, and by teens.

www.shine365.com

Teens can go to this site for contests, mingling with other teens, questions to ponder and work through, and the chance to speak out about the issues that concern or interest them.

www.dosomething.org

This is a nationwide network of over four million teens that are interested in making a difference in their communities and their world. It's the place to discuss ideas, share visions, and come up with possible solutions.

www.studyabroad.com

Ever thought about living in another country for a while? Check out this site for information on how, where, and why you might do it. It in-

cludes information on how to go for a year, a semester, a summer, or an internship. You can sign up for a free weekly newsletter too.

Other teen sites of interest include: www.teenmag.com, www.seventeen.com, www.teenpeople.com, and www.cyberteens.com.

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GETTING SERIOUS: FINDING FACTS AND LEARNING A LOT

It may be hard for you to remember a time B.C.—before computers—but for the older generation, it is still pretty clear. Back then, research meant time in a library looking through books and hoping to find what you wanted to know. Books are still a fabulous source of information, but now you can also do your research sitting in your own home or library. Answers are at your fingertips any time of day and all you have to do is figure out the right way to ask the question.

The sites listed here are the ones that will not only help you with whatever curriculum your parents and you have chosen to use but also—and often more importantly—it will help you learn the information *you* really want to know. Most kids have one passion or another (or a few dozen) and the Internet can help feed those passions with thousands, even millions, of sites that have great facts and terrific links to more than you had ever known existed. Find facts, but even better, have fun in this section!

KEEPING CURRENT

These news sites can help you follow the headlines and current events.

www.worldinfozone.com

This site was started in 1997 by educators who wanted young people to have access to multi-cultural education. This site offers more than three hundred Web pages and three thousand links, along with “Newslink” for worldwide news and “Linking the World” for profiles of each individual country. It’s truly a world of information!

www.timeforkids.com

Sponsored by *Time* Magazine, this bright site offers a lot for kids of many different ages. You can click on the separate box in the upper left for headline news or check out their Specials or their Today’s News sections. The Games section features things like the Trivia Dunk Off, the Great Skate Race, Star Search Trivia, and Mag-o-Matic. The News department has four divisions to choose from: National, Sport, Entertainment, and World. Look It Up is the place you can get words defined, search the site’s articles, ask questions, get metric conversions, find map directions, and even contact people in Congress. Magazines is where you can find the site in Spanish, as well as Map Mania, and Go Places, a page that lets you choose one destination from six and takes you there with pictures and facts.

www.kidnews.com/

Sports, news, reviews and more for kids and written by kids all over the globe. You can find pen pals here and get advice from kids everywhere.

You can also keep up with breaking national and world news at sites like: www.cnn.com, www.totalnews.com, www.usatoday.com, www.nytimes.com, and www.abcnews.com.

ENGLISH/WRITING

Whether you need help for a paper you are writing or you just love the whole writing process itself, here are some helpful sites.

www.writesite.org

Ever thought about becoming a journalist? Here's a place to find out if you are suited for it or not. At Write Site, you take on the role of a journalist; getting leads, gathering facts, and writing a story. It's actually a multimedia language arts curriculum—but don't let that title scare you away. It's a fun place to explore a new kind of writing. Check out the Newsroom, where you can go to the Features Desk, the Research Beat, the Style Section, or the Classroom Challenge.

www.powa.org

The Paradigm Online Writing Assistant is here to help you with your reports and papers. It helps from the first step of choosing your subject, all the way through organization and finding facts to revising and editing.

www.ipl.org/dir/aplus/aplus.html

Plan to spend some time at this site of the Internet Public Library. It is there to help higher-level students with writing and research. It includes step-by-step instructions for writing a research paper, ideas on what to read, ways to search the Internet, many links and best of all, Subject Collections. Each one of these options leads you to more links across the Internet on specific subjects. There are quite a few, ranging from Money Matters and Books and Writing to Issues and Conflicts and Dating and Stuff.

www.coder.com/creations/tale/

This is an intriguing site; called "The Neverending Story," it gives you the chance to read ongoing stories other kids are writing and then contribute your own portion of the action. It is recommended for kids age eight to sixteen.

ENGLISH/READING**www.roalddahl.com/index3.htm**

Roald Dahl fans (and who isn't?!), unite and run to this site. The graphics alone make the visit worthwhile, but you can also find out

about the man himself, as well as tricks and quizzes and pop up visits from familiar figures. Great fun!

Don't stop there—check out the website of your favorite author. Here are some of them, but if yours isn't listed, put the writer's name in a search box and see what comes up! You might add the words *biography* or *website* to the terms.

www.avi-writer.com/: For fans of Avi's books

www.compleatbellairs.com/: For fans of John Bellairs' books

www.jeancraigheadgeorge.com/: From the author of *Julie of the Wolves*

www.zksnyder.com/: For fans of Zilpha Keatley Snyder's books

www.carr.lib.md.us/authco/spinelli-j.htm: An interview with author Jerry Spinelli

redwall.org/: For all of those Redwall fans

www.judyblume.com/menu-main.html: For fans of Judy Blume's many books

www.janeyolen.com/: For science fiction, fantasy fans of Jane Yolen's

www.raybradbury.com/: For Bradbury's fans of all ages

www.brucecoville.com/: The man himself and his site

www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/: For fans of Paulsen's books

www.annemccaffrey.org/: For lovers of sci fi/fantasy and the world of Pern

Need advice on what to read next? Check out these sites for teens: tln.lib.mi.us/~amutch/jen/index.html, www.framinghamlibrary.org/teen/reading.htm, and www.grouchy.com/angst/.

Or look at this site for recommended reading categories for kids, teens and adults: madison.scls.lib.wi.us/youth/booklists/.

www.bookadventure.com/

You can create your own reading lists, take quizzes, earn points and prizes, and much more at this Book Adventure site. Have fun!

SCIENCE

If you like science, the possibilities out there are almost as endless as the universe!

faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html

This site is called Neuroscience for Kids, and it is loaded with information. There are a number of choices to pick from on the home page, including Explore the Nervous System, Experiments and Activities, International Neuroscience Research, Neuroscience in the News, and the Neuroscientist Network. Each one of these divisions leads to a vast number of other links, so plan to be here for a while. You can sign up for a free e-mail newsletter and participate in their contests.

kids.msfc.nasa.gov

Interested in outer space? This is the place to go for top information. Sponsored by NASA, it features enough information to keep you reading for hours. The choices on the home page are: Projects and Games (puzzles, coloring pages, stories); Club House (free membership); Rockets and Airplanes (satellites, space shuttle, mapping earth from space); Astronauts Living in Space (space wardrobes, careers in NASA, the space station); Creation Station (kids' drawings, poems and pictures); Our Earth (sun, clouds, moon, meteors); and Space and Beyond (black holes, quasars, galaxies).

www.innerbody.com/htm/body.html

It's time to explore the inner you. This site has ten choices to pick from: The Skeletal System, The Nervous System, The Cardiovascular System, The Endocrine System, The Digestive System, The Muscular System, The Lymphatic System, The Urinary System, The Male Reproductive System, and the Female Reproductive System. Once you choose one, it takes you to a full-size picture of the human body, each highlighted with little green arrows. Place your cursor over an arrow, and it tells you what that specific element is called. Go below the picture for other choices within the system. Click on to see further pictures or explanations in the long box on the right side of the screen.

www.sciencepage.org

If you like science or need someplace to start for a report, go to this site. The home page offers twenty-four different science choices from science history to paleontology to weather. Click on one of these, and you will have an impressively long list of links to go to from there.

www.kidsastronomy.com

Explore the solar system and deep space at this website. It has an Astro Fun Zone with games and jokes and a free Astronomy Academy which provides lessons on what is out there in space. The Sky Tonight shows the stars' positions on any given date and hour, and you can print it out. Other choices include Ask the Expert, Space Exploration, and How Big Is the Universe?

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/hotscience/

A favorite among science buffs is PBS's *Nova* shows. Find out all about Probing the Brain and How Cells Divide, along with lots more of what's up in the science world at this site.

volcano.und.nodak.edu/

Interested in learning more about volcanoes? This is the place. You can find out current eruptions, volcano adventures, and history, and send your questions to a real volcanologist.

www.insectlore.com/

Not too surprisingly, this one is about bugs. Everything you wanted to know and much, much more. . . .

MATH

If numbers are your thing, check out these "countless" sites!

math.rice.edu/~lanius/Lessons/

For some, this site belongs in the Fun and Games portion of the book—it depends on your perspective on math. Even if you don't count numbers high on your fun list, you might well enjoy this site. It includes activities like Who Wants a Pizza? (fractions); Calendar Fun (algebra puzzle); Fun and Sun Rent a Car (word problems and graphs), and the Million Dollar Mission (money and interest).

www.coastlink.com/users/sbryce/mathwork

Here is a site where you can create and print math worksheets using simple arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) to your heart's delight. Another site for something similar is www.superkids.com/aweb/tools/math.

www.funbrain.com/

If you like to fiddle around with math, go check out this site. It has all kinds of math games from Math Baseball and Tic Tac Toe Squares (harder than it sounds!) to Math Car Racing and Connect the Dots. Games are listed by age (grades K through eight) and you can go beyond math and choose games with words or culture also.

HISTORY**www.hyperhistory.com**

If you like timelines, check out the ones on this site. They have timelines for historical events and people, plus lists of the most influential people in history and even a special section all about the story of global warming. All in all, this site has over two thousand files covering three thousand years of world history.

www.biography.com

Here is the place to go to find out the background of over 25,000 different lives. You can also find out who was born on that day, Top Ten

Bios, and much more. This site can help you find out about people you have wondered about or just help with background for a report.

www.whitehouse.gov/kids

Here you can find out all about the President, his family, and his job as the leader of the country, as well as other important people who work with the President in the White House. Another site that might help with history reports is www.50states.com (all the states and capitals).

www.historychannel.com/thisday/

From cable's the History Channel comes this website so full of information that it's hard to know where to start. Choose from topical sections like Crime History, Technology, History or Literary History; find out what happened today in history or discover what happened in history on your birthday (besides you!) This is a great site for personal interest as well as any report you might be working on.

ART

www.eduweb.com/pintura

This is a fun way to learn about art. Set as a mystery, it tells the tale of "The Case of Grandpa's Painting" and teaches about art in the process. The visitor can choose which way to go, as in the popular "choose your own ending" books.

www.talentteacher.com

Learn how to paint pictures, draw cartoons, and much more on this site. It takes you step by step through whichever picture you choose to try. It lists the materials you will need, and you can always push the "Back" button if you get confused.

www.draw3d.com/

For many young artists, the name Mark Kistler brings a smile to their faces. He is the man who has put out some of the best drawing books on the market and host of the PBS show, *Imagination Station*, which is carried on almost two hundred different stations across the nation. This is his website and not too surprisingly, he offers lessons, tips, ideas, and fun.

GEOGRAPHY

www.nationalgeographic.com

There are few names so trusted for solid and fascinating information as the National Geographic Society. Their website features endless information, and if you click on the For Kids headline on the left, you go to their younger site which has items like Creature Feature, Coloring Pages, Amazing Facts, games, and even a book club.

www.supersurf.com

Go on a World Safari with this site. You can choose from twenty different countries from the drop-down menu on the left and then go there to find out their history, people, society, weather, and much more.

**www.uncwil.edu/nurc/aquarius/ and
wp.netscape.com/fishcam/**

This first URL is for the world's only underwater laboratory, according to the banner on the site, and for ocean enthusiasts, this is a great stop. Sent from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, it features virtual tours, mission updates, and contests. If fish are your thing, check out the second link for live cams on different sea creatures.

GENERAL INFORMATION

www.howstuffworks.com

This site is sure to keep you interested, and you might even find yourself murmuring an occasional “wow!” Designed to do just what the title suggests, this site tells you in understandable terms how things work. The front page offers a combination: a typical listing would be: How Joysticks Work, How Pickpockets Work, How Teleportation Will Work, and How Car Engines Work. Side choices are the Top Ten Questions and the Top Ten Articles. Check out any of the fifteen Super Categories and you will certainly lose track of time going from one thing to another. The Cool Stuff! category offers How Chocolate Works, How Guide Dogs Work, How Hypnosis Works, and How Hoverboards Will Work. Click on Toys and Games instead, and you can find out How Billiard Tables Work, How Sega Dreamcast Works, How Light Sticks Work, How Pinball Machines Work, and How Water Slides Work.

www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/index.html

This site will show you lots of different things like cyberethics or how to be a good and safe cybercitizen, and Inside the Courtroom, where you can learn about what all the different people do inside a courtroom, from the lawyers to the judges, and everyone in between. You can also see the list of the Ten Most Wanted Fugitives, the history of civil rights, and Get It Straight: facts about drugs. There is also a page that leads you to several aspects of how you can play a part in crime prevention.

www.field-guides.com/trips.html

Here is a way to go on a field trip without leaving the house. Just click on this website and select from over thirty different places to explore, from the ocean to wildfires, Antarctica to sharks, hurricanes to dinosaurs, and more. Each one comes with questions and lessons if you want to pursue them. The fun part is the photos that go along with each trip, plus additional graphics for an occasional explanation.

falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/kids.htm

Don't head here unless you have lots of free time. This site is so full of fascinating links that, just like a fresh bag of potato chips—it's almost impossible to stop at just one.

www.refdesk.com/

Need some facts? This is the place to go. Billed as the "Single Best Source for Facts on the Internet," it lets you search for what you need, as well as some general categories to choose from. It's like having your reference librarians working for you personally.

FUTURE PLANS**falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/careers.htm**

Trying to decide to go to college? Study abroad? Go to a community college? Travel? Check out the huge variety of links on this site that can tell you what you need to know about every possible career from firefighter to veterinarian.

www.eduprep.com/

Here is the place to find out the basics about what you need to know when you think about the college options. This has lots of information for each category of Scholarships, SAT Preparation, Student Loans, College Tours, Admissions, and Prep for Essay Writing. A similar, helpful site is www.collegeboard.com/.

www.bridges.com

Billed as "North America's leading provider of career and educational planning solutions," this site offers lots of information on career options and does so rather humorously.

SOME EXTRA HELPERS

Some other sites you will want to bookmark so that you can use them on a regular basis are:

www.dictionary.com (Dr. Dictionary)

www.encyclopedia.com (obviously, an online encyclopedia)

www.vocabulary.com (what else?)

www.m-w.com (the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*)

www.worldbook.com (the *World Book* reference series)

www.britannica.com (the *Britannica* reference series)

encarta.msn.com/default.asp? (Encarta reference series)

falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/referenc.htm (links from the Virtual Reference Library)

www.pcwebopedia.com/ (This is the site for Webopedia, the dictionary and search engine for computer and internet technology.)

ericir.syr.edu (This is AskERIC, a federally funded national information system.)

MAKING YOUR ACQUAINTANCE: FINDING FRIENDS AND CHATTING TO CHUMS

Just as a car can take you to exotic places and give you the chance to meet interesting people, so can your computer. Without a doubt, one of the biggest perks of a computer is finding friends all over the world. Whether you are looking for someone else who likes the same author/group/game/sport that you do or you are just searching for others to chat/complain/giggle/share with, the computer can be the perfect answer. You can meet people from all over the world and learn about their lifestyles (it's a great geography class!) or you can keep in touch with friends or relatives who have moved away. Keep in mind though, that going online to meet others is one of the bigger risks; there are people out there just waiting to scam, threaten, or frighten kids—check back to that list of cyber safety rules. Remember too, that if anything happens online while you are chatting with someone that upsets or scares you, report it to your parents immediately.

CHATTING AWAY

Before you get started, you might want to learn some of the abbreviations that are used commonly by others. They are usually used just to cut down on the amount of typing.



AFK	Away from keyboard	FYI	For your information
BBL	Be back later	H&K	Hug and kiss
BBN	Bye bye now	IMO	In my opinion
BBS	Be back soon	IMHO	In my humble opinion
BEG	Big evil grin	LOL	Laughing out loud
BRB	Be right back	OIC	Oh, I see
BTW	By the way	ROFL	Rolling on the floor laughing
BWL	Bursting with laughter	SWL	Screaming with laughter
CSG	Chuckle Snicker Grin	TTFN	Ta Ta For Now
CYA	See you	WB	Welcome Back

Before you join a chat room, remind yourself never to reveal your real name and address under any circumstances. Pick a nickname instead and if someone wants to know where you live, stick to the state only. If someone persists in wanting to know more, tell your parents or fall back on the simple, "My parents don't want me to give out that information."

Now, flex those typing fingers and get ready to meet some people!

www.a1chat-rooms.com

This site has more than 700 links, so it offers a little something for everyone. The selection of rooms you can choose from ranges from sports to teens to kids to music and more. If you click on one of the categories, it will take you to a list of links to various chat rooms. There are more than fifteen listed for kids and more than twenty for teens. It's a good place to start when investigating chat rooms. Be forewarned, however, that whoever monitors the site doesn't check to make sure all of their links are working. Some of the ones listed no longer exist.

www.skatetalk.com

Like skateboarding? You aren't alone. This teen site lets you talk to others all over the world who share the same passion.

www.cyberpals.studentcenter.org

This site offers you the chance to connect with over 77,000 other teens on the Internet. Be aware that some of the categories and sections may be controversial, so check with your parents before accessing this. Some of the choices are College, Gaming, Music, and Sports. It also includes teen jokes, games, and much more.

www.neonteen.com

With almost 750 members, this site offers teens a place to chat and take part in some interactive quizzes.

www.teenchatcenter.com

This site is moderated nicely and emphasizes online safety. Different chat rooms are available, including Teen Flirt, Teen Chat, and Younger Teens Chat, plus a game area and a free e-mail offer.

www.hbz.phillynews.com

Brought to you by the Headbone Zone, this site offers teens the chance to chat online and to go to Match Up, where they can be connected to pen pals around the world.

www.magicalkingdom.co.uk/chat.htm

From the “land down under” comes this kids’ chat room that has nothing to do with Disneyland. It is a fun place to chat with kids from all over the globe, however, and it has rules about safety and behavior.

<http://www.kidchatters.com/solution.html#choice>

Unlike most chat websites, this one has a fee attached to it, albeit a minimal one of \$2.95 a month. Why? This site is heavily monitored for content and has strict behavior rules. If your parents are concerned about you chatting online, this is the site that will probably please them the most.

www.michander.com/sape/menu-e.html

This is the official site for SAPE: Soviet-American Penfriend Exchange. They specialize in connecting people (ages ten and up) in America with people in Russia to be pen pals, i.e. snail mail, not e-mail. They have been doing it since 1989 and currently have over 100,000 people in the Soviet Union waiting for a pen pal. If you would like to meet someone from a distant country, log on here and find out the process.

www.worldkids.net/clubs/kci/

Started by a teenager, this site has been around since 1996 and was recently voted one of the top 101 sites for kids by *Consumer Guide*. You can meet people through the message boards and go into the chat room. It's a fun, safe site for kids of all ages.

www.teenadvice.org

If you are having some problems (and what teen doesn't at one point or another?), consider checking here for some possible ideas and/or solutions. This site started in 1996 and its mission is to "support teenage problems through a network of peers from around the globe." It features non-professional counselors ages thirteen and up who can share some suggestions with you on what to do. They have an area where people have written in their anonymous stories, a place to imagine called Dreamer's World and a big archive of articles.

www.kidscom.com/chat/kidschat/kidschat.html

Here is another fun site for kids and teens. It offers a place to make your own page and look at other kids' pages, plus a section for finding a Key Pal, Games, and Adventures.

www.livejournal.com

This is a site where you can write an online diary or journal about your life. You can read your contact names, friend's journals and they can


read yours if you are on each other's lists. You can keep in touch with friends that way, or you can meet others with similar interests by entering a topic like "homeschooling" or "ferrets."

www.kidlink.org/IRC/

Here is a site that lists itself as the place that wants to "empower kids and youth to build global networks of friends." Joining is easy and free and you get to chat with other kids quickly.

groups.yahoo.com/subscribe.cgi/homeschool-kids

This is a Yahoo Group specifically set up for homeschooled kids. Check it out—but ask your parents first.



FREE DOWNLOAD CHAT PROGRAMS

Other sites that require you to download their programs in order to chat with people worldwide are: Internet Relay Chat at www.mirc.com/ (free for 30 days); www.icq.com/download/; chat.msn.com/ and messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/download/index.html. None of these are specifically designed for children, however, so make sure that you click on appropriate groups to join.

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HOMESCHOOLING LINKS: CONNECTING KIDS AND TALKING WITH TEENS

This chapter is full of sites specifically aimed at homeschoolers. Some of the pages are by organizations and others are just by homeschoolers themselves. They range from chat rooms to interactive sites to just plain fun. The sites are divided into teens and kids but check all of them out—in homeschooling, age is often just not a consideration.

TEENS

www.smokylake.com/Christy/

This site is called Christy's Garden, and it is put together by a teen homeschooler. She offers eight categories to choose from, including everything from Stories to Local History. The banner says the site will feature history, mythology, homeschooling, poetry, essays, quotes, and spirituality.

www.cis.upenn.edu/%7ebrada/homeschooling.html

Created by a homeschooling high school student, this site features common questions and answers about homeschooling kids in high school.

It includes a list of colleges and universities that accept homeschoolers, many links, a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and a FQA (Frequently Questioned Answers). The motto here is “Whisper and the world will look our way.”

members.aol.com/mkins54/MHSWenter.html

The teen who runs this site isn't identified, but it offers more than twenty-five links to other resources, including Current Events, HTML Hints, Music and Dinosaurs.

paradoxical.nbtsc.org/schoolfree/

This site is run by NBTSCers—Not Back to School Campers from the camp created by Grace Llewellyn in Oregon. Called “School Free: Pursuing Real Life,” it supports the homeschooling methods of unschooling through letters by unschoolers, unschooling resources, and an e-mail contact list.

www.apricotpie.com/

This unusually named site is listed as a website “by and for homeschoolers” and it includes essays, poetry, polls, chat rooms and message boards. It appears to be maintained frequently, with current messages posted on it.

members.tripod.com/~homeplanet98/index.html

This is an ICQ (I Seek You) chat room that is specifically geared for homeschoolers.

www.angelfire.com/ak/anakee/homeschool.html

This site features the online version of the 2 Cool 4 School Teen Voice e-zine. It also offers a free cyber newsletter, poetry, e-pals and three different chat rooms.

www.nbtsc.org/wiki/NBTWikiWiki

If you have ever heard of the Not Back to School Camp in Oregon, this is the main place to find out more about it. It features camp information, links, pictures and poems.

groups.yahoo.com/group/Homeschool_Teens/

Here is a place to join a Yahoo chat room for homeschooled teens only.

library.thinkquest.org/28188/

Created by an entrepreneurial homeschooled teen, this site is called eBiz4Teenz and shows other teens (homeschooled or not) how to develop the skills of their inner entrepreneur or inner 'trep, as the site calls it. The site has won numerous awards and media attention.

www.myartandmind.com/

This is an online magazine or e-zine called My Art and Mind and it features art and ideas for artists, entrepreneurs, and alternative learners. It comes out of Canada and is written and managed by a twenty-five-year-old homeschooled college graduate.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/explore/teensites.htm

For more sites and just some incredibly wonderful and almost endless homeschooling resources, check out this site and its home page. There's something there to help everyone from your youngest sibling to your grandparents.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/articles/021599.htm

If you get picky, no, this site isn't necessarily geared for teenagers. However, it is about something you most likely care about—driver's

education. This is an article written for parents on what to do about teaching driver's ed. to the homeschooled teen. Some great information here to share with mom and dad.

KIDS

expage.com/page/homeschoolkids

This site is from two homeschooling sisters, ages seven and thirteen, living in Philadelphia. It includes a family page about them, as well as twenty-plus links to favorite sites, including their parent's store.

www.kidstownglobal.com

Kids Town is a magazine for homeschooled kids by homeschooled kids. It has articles to read, cool sites, fun stuff, interviews, stories, and reviews. They can also connect you to e-pals and pen pals.

www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Creek/9801/index.html

This site comes from Tyler, an eleven-year-old living in Ontario, Canada. He shares his interests with you through an Adventure site, a Mystery site and more.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/explore/kidsites.htm

Again, here is the place for a whole list of great homeschooling sites—and don't miss their home page. This site is for the whole family.

Does having your own homeschooling website look like fun? Check out this site to find out some of the basic elements on how to create your very own too: www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/explore/webdesign.htm.

HELPING MOM AND DAD: SEEKING SUPPORT AND RESEARCHING RESOURCES

It's time to hand the book over to your parents for a turn. This is the chapter where they—and you, for that matter—can find websites to help in the overall homeschooling process. This book is not endorsing any specific companies or products here; occasionally one will be mentioned that is quite popular or well-recommended; others are here because they offer a wide variety of materials from an equally wide variety of stores. This is the place where you can find the informational sites that can help you fill out a unit study, help organize a set of lesson plans—or just feed that kid's ravenous passion.

GENERAL RESOURCES

These sites will give you some general homeschooling information; good places for beginners or if you have a certain question you need answered, as these sites will most likely have the information or a link to where it can be found.

www.homeschool.com/top100/

This site is one of the biggest on the Net for homeschooling information. This particular link will take you to their selected list of the Top 100 Educational Sites on the Net in all subject matters. Click on “Resources” at the bottom of the list, or just go to www.homeschool.com/resources/default.asp, and you will find very helpful resources in a huge variety of areas.

www.midnightbeach.com/hs/

Don't stop at Jon's Homeschool Resource Page unless you have some time to browse; it is a large site with a lot to offer. Go here: www.midnightbeach.com/hs/TOC.table.f.html for a Table of Contents to this site. It's the best place to start, although the site also offers a great FAQ site and much more.

www.homeeducator.com/

This is the website for Home Educators, “The Place for Educational Entrepreneurs.” You will find helpful general information here, as well as articles and an online catalog.

www.hsadvisor.com/

The banner states, “Home school advice, curriculum and resources” and they state that this is the place to “ask questions about homeschooling and get a prompt reply from one of our home education experts, buy homeschool curriculum online, find homeschool support groups, discover your state's homeschooling laws, and a lot more.”

www.sitesforteachers.com/

This site has countless links to teaching resource websites of every kind imaginable. You will most likely find information for whatever you are studying here, as well as links on how to teach the information best.

donnayoung.org/

Have you been searching for just the right homeschooling form for what you are doing? Your search will most likely end here. At this site, you can download (for free!) everything you need to stay organized. There are planners, schedules, journals, certificates—you name it. Scan what's available and make sure you have ink in your printer. If you aren't able to find the right form there, skip over to teachers.hypermart.net/links/pages/Worksheets/Homeschool_Forms/, and see what they have available. You can also learn all about how to create your own homeschooling stationery and forms at Ann Zeise's www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/articles/012698.htm.

homeschooling.miningco.com/

From the site that offers you information about just everything—appropriately named “About.com,” this site leads you to many, many different aspects of homeschooling. Just click on the one you want to know about most in the left-hand column.

www.sound.net/~ejcol/confer.html

Want to find out if there are any homeschool conferences in your area? This is the place, listed by state.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/index.htm

Pack a lunch before you go here. A to Z (for founder Ann Zeise) Home's Cool Homeschool Website is one of the most inclusive, wide and resourceful sites on the web when it comes to homeschooling.

KEEPING CURRENT

Wondering what's new in the news about homeschooling? Here is just a sampling.

www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0053.html

One of the latest statistical reports on the homeschooling movement, this site is valuable for answering some of those annoyingly persistent questions.

www.time.com/time/covers/1101010827/

This is an article in *Time* Magazine that looks at graduating homeschoolers and the overall trends.

www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed435709.html

This is a 1999 report from AskERIC that many people quote, so take a look at it and see what you think.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/weblinks/debate.htm

Have you wondered about—or even been a part of—some of the controversies that rage within homeschooling? Look here for some interesting ideas and opinions on the issues.

www.geocities.com/mmoy/hsitn.html

This site keeps a list of links to the most recent homeschooling news articles—both the ones that make you cheer and the ones that make you cringe. You can find even more of them at homeschooling.about.com/cs/newtopstories/index.htm and search.news.yahoo.com/search/news?p=homeschooling&c=.

MAGAZINES/PUBLICATIONS: ON- AND OFFLINE

This list will show you some of the many different homeschooling publications on the market. Some are only online; some are only in print and some are both.

www.home-ed-magazine.com/

This is the home page to one of homeschooling's largest and most read publications, *Home Education Magazine*. This is the place to start if you are new and want to know a little of everything, from personal stories to where to get curriculum. They offer a print version through the mail. Their online version of the magazine offers, "free online newsletters, discussion boards, a networking list and selections from the magazine, including articles, interviews, columnists, resources, reviews, and more!"

www.homeschooldigest.com/

This is the home page for *Home School Digest*, a magazine that supports and helps Christian homeschoolers. According to their statement, the magazine is there to share stories of homeschooling families and, it states, "it won't all be roses. It won't all be thorns. Together, we'll tackle some rough topics that may unsettle you a bit, but will ultimately shore up the foundations of your convictions."

eho.org/features/

This online magazine is from Eclectic Homeschooler Online. According to the site, this publication "promotes creative homeschooling through unique resources, teaching methods and online helps." It is published from a Christian worldview but articles and material are not limited to Christian perspectives only. As they put it, "We leave the decision in your hands as to what material you choose to use and ideas you choose to incorporate in your homeschooling."

www.lifelearningmagazine.com/

"The International Magazine of Self Directed Learning" debuted in 2002. It is designed for homeschoolers of all ages—including parents—and invites them to learn about other autodidacts, plus curricula reviews, personal stories and much more.

www.homeschoolnewslink.com/

This is the “Nation’s Homeschool Newspaper” and offers a free e-mail service. With authors like Cafi Cohen, John Taylor Gatto, and the Leperts, there is some great information here.

www.theoldhomeschoolhouse.com/magazine.htm

This is both an online and in print quarterly magazine. It goes out across the entire globe but is based in California. It is specifically geared for Christian homeschoolers.

www.pathsoflearning.org/index.cfm

Paths of Learning is not strictly for homeschoolers but for followers of any educational alternative from Waldorf to Montessori to home education. It is for parents and teachers to explore the world of education.

www.home-school.com/Columnists.html

This is the official website for the *Practical Homeschooling* magazine and along with articles, it has tons of information to link to from the home page. (www.home-school.com/) Articles by people like Mary Pride, Cathy Duffy, and Greg Harris are found here.

pages.ivillage.com/4rightathome/

Right at Home is a print publication that, “offers ideas and support to homeschool parents feeling the need to connect with other home educators.” The site offers lots of general homeschooling information also.

SUPPORT GROUPS AND MORE

If you need support and encouragement in your homeschooling decision, here are some of the places you can find it—or at least, be told just where to look for it.

www.midnightbeach.com/hs/Talk.chat.f.html

This is Jon's Homeschooling Page's Chat Room for Homeschoolers of all ages, including your kids. It is unmoderated and adults use it too, so it is listed here. For a variety of possible homeschooling news groups to join, go to www.midnightbeach.com/hs/Talk.web.f.html instead.

groups.yahoo.com/subscribe.cgi/alexconnections

This is a Yahoo Group set up for homeschooling parents who have a physical or mental condition or have a child who does.

www.madrone.com/Home-ed/hewelcome.html

This website is for the Home Education Mailing List. If you join, you will be able to ask all the questions you want, but you will also receive a lot of e-mail. This page will give you all the details about how to subscribe and unsubscribe, as well as posting rules.

groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/RUL

This is yet another Yahoo group—this one is for those who consider themselves Radical Unschoolers. If that's you or your family, this is a good place to find like-minded friends.

www.nhen.org/

Home site for the National Home Education Network, this site gives a huge variety of information and helps link you with support groups all over the nation. It includes information for special needs homeschoolers, military homeschoolers, conference updates, and much more.

www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/weblinks/support.htm

Almost everything you want to know about finding a local support group, or starting your own, can be found at this website.

homeschooling.about.com/cs/supportgroups/

From those helpful people at About.com comes this list of support group sites and related information.

CURRICULA

There are countless curricula companies out there to choose from; this is just a sampling of some of the more popular sites.

www.fun-books.com/

Have you heard of John Holt? Here is the place to find his books, along with many other titles that homeschoolers, and especially unschoolers, will want to see.

www.classroomdirect.com/

Geared for teachers, this is the place to go for everything from scissors to books to paper and more. Discounts are available.

www.chinaberry.com/

This site offers books from the tough kinds your kids can chew, all the way up through adult. The best thing about this catalog is that the reviews are in depth and from a mom. You really know what you are buying when you make your selections here.

**www.homeschooldiscount.com/ and
www.homeschoolcentralmall.com/**

Once again, these two places are excellent places to shop for virtually all of your homeschooling needs, and all at a discount.

www.schoolhousetech.com/

You can download several free samples of different worksheets at this site. If you like what you see, you can go on to purchase the entire set.

**[www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/
materials/AmazonBooks.htm](http://www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling/materials/AmazonBooks.htm)**

If you want to read books about homeschooling, there certainly is no lack of them. Check Amazon or Border's sites and type in "homeschooling" in the search box. You may be surprised at how many come up. The listing above are the top twenty recommended from 2001 from the A to Z site. Other options to check out are: www.christianhomeschoolers.com/hs/books.shtml (Christian books); www.homeschool.com/articles/top10books/default.asp and learninfreedom.org/recommendedbooks.html.

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RECOMMENDED READING

- Friday, Jennifer and Chris Mansfield. *101 Cool Sites for Kids on the Internet*. Instructional Fair, 1998.
- Gregory, Callie and Marcus Sorensen. *Jeeves, I'm Bored: 25 Internet Adventures for Kids*. Ask Jeeves, 2000.
- Kids! *Kids Rule the Net: The Only Guide to the Internet: Your Personal Net*. Wolff New Media, 1996.
- Leebow, Eric. *You Are Here College Internet Guide*. Yahbooks Publishing, 2001.
- Leebow, Eric. *You Are Here High School Internet Guide*. Yahbooks Publishing, 2001.
- Leebow, Eric. *You Are Here Kids and Family Internet Guide*. Yahbooks Publishing, 2001.
- Mintzer, Richard, et al. *The Everything Kids Online Book: Email, Penpals, Live Chats, Home Pages, Family Trees, Homework and Much More*. Adams Media Corp., 2000.
- Pedersen, Ted, et al. *Make Your Own Web Page! A Guide for Kids*. Price, Stern Sloan, 1998.
- Schwartau, Winn. *Internet and Computer Ethics for Kids (and Parents and Teachers Who Haven't Got a Clue)*. Inter-Pact Press, 2001.
- Trumbauer, Lisa. *Homework Help for Kids on the Net*. Econo-Clad Books, 2000.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tamra Orr is a homeschooling mother of four children, ages eighteen to six. She and her family live in lovely Portland, Oregon and after spending most of their lives in Indiana, they still gasp at the gorgeous mountain ranges. Tamra is the author of Mars Publishing's *The Parent's Guide to Homeschooling: The Complete Guide* (2002), as well as a dozen books for kids and young adults. She is a full time writer and in her seven spare minutes a day, she loves to read, listen to music, and cuddle with her kids—especially all three at the same time!

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