



Overview

Library Webs: an Internet library of approximately 100,000 carefully selected links for secondary schools. The collection is arranged in subject categories as in a regular library. The topics are divided into sections which help students to grasp the topic as a whole while being able to investigate aspects in depth. Users can search the database on a keyword or advanced search basis, or browse the topics. The resource has been designed and developed for middle and senior secondary school students.

Benefits

Teacher-Librarians

Teacher-Librarians using *Library Webs* do not need to search for and collate lists of Internet resources for their Library pathfinders. *Library Webs* are constantly revised and updated. *Library Webs* staff welcomes suggestions for new topics and sections if resources are not already available in the database.

Teachers

Teachers using *Library Webs* know that an extensive Internet library is immediately available and that they do not need to find Internet resources for their students. During research lessons, teachers are assured that their students are accessing only the best quality sites on the Web and that time is not wasted on futile or misdirected searches. Teachers may also suggest new topics and sections to *Library Webs* for upcoming assignments. Most topics contain a section just for teachers containing ideas for lessons plans and online activities that can be used *as is* or adapted for classroom use.

Library Webs resources can be used as a support to study units or as the central focus to a unit of work. Because of the division of each topic into sections, *Library Webs* provide a unique set of resources for group work, and offers a scaffolding tool for in-depth study.

Students

Students using *Library Webs* have immediate access to authoritative Internet resources and are able to stay focused on learning outcomes, without the distraction of all the extraneous material which is present on the Internet.

Library Webs assist students to learn independently. Students are guided to sites which have been selected for their quality, accuracy, reliability and relevance. Students have room to explore topics broadly or to study in depth. The sites presented by *Library Webs* are always in context, so students are aware of how their facet of study fits into the broader framework of the subject.

Special features

- *Illustrations:* Each topic is illustrated with relevant graphics that enhance the learning experience.
- *Descriptors:* Websites that have a special attribute, for example newspaper article, map, interactive, have a descriptor in square brackets after the title.
- *Link acknowledgement:* the source of each link is acknowledged so that teachers and students are aware of the origin and authenticity of the resources.
- *Dates:* Some websites such as newspaper and magazine articles are dated to indicate the time of their publication. Others are not dated as they are generally updated regularly by their web publishers.
- *Grade level:* Each link is labeled as appropriate for Senior School or Middle School. Senior School sites contain information which has advanced vocabulary, concepts and adult issues (e.g. legal studies, some social issues etc.). Middle School sites contain information which has low-to middle level vocabulary, easily navigable layout or a less advanced approach to the subject.

Finding information

There are various ways in which subscribers are able to find the information they require. In every case, *Library Webs* are simple to use. No complex strategies or sophisticated research skills are required to access the information.

Topic listing

A full listing of the topics within each category can be found under the Topics tab.

Browsing through the Subject categories

As can be seen from the home page, the resources are arranged under fifteen broad headings. Checking the contents of each heading will give users an overall view of what is available. For instance, if *Ancient and Medieval History* is selected, the list of topics currently available appears on the screen, e.g. *Middle Ages*, *Stone Age*, *China: Prehistoric and Bronze Age*, *Egypt: Ancient Civilisation*, *Mesopotamian Civilisations*, *Europe: Ancient Peoples*, *Rome: Republic*

If *Middle Ages* is chosen, there is not a long list of sites on the Middle Ages; instead there is a carefully organised set of sections dealing with various aspects of the medieval period – the art and literature of the time, the Black Death, the role of the Church, the Crusades, the feudal system and so on. A general section covers any gaps. There is a special section for teachers that contains lesson plans, interactive games and worksheets. Users will then be able to focus on the aspect in which they are particularly interested. There is no longer any need to bother with the frustration of sorting through the plethora of material delivered by the average search engine. The best material is right here at the user's fingertips – in context.

Keyword search and Advanced search

As well as the Topic listing and Subject categories, *Library Webs* offer a keyword and advanced search facility to access the resources.

Example of keyword search: Myanmar

If the term *Myanmar* is typed into the search bar, a list of links will appear. Under each link, in fine print, the search results reveal a 'breadcrumb trail' that shows the location of that link

within its context in the database collection. For example, the user will see there is information on Myanmar in:

Philosophy, Psychology and Ethics > Animal Rights and Animal Welfare > Ivory Trade

This indicates that the link is found in the subject category, *Philosophy, Psychology and Ethics*, under the Topic, *Animal Rights and Animal Welfare* which has a section entitled *Ivory Trade*.

Similarly, more links about Myanmar are found in other places such as:

- Modern World History > Political Reformers: 20th-21st Centuries > Aung San Suu Kyi b. 1945
- Social Sciences > Indigenous Cultures > Karen of Myanmar: Persecution
- Chemistry and Earth Sciences > Weather and climate > Burma: Cyclone Nargis, 2008
- Chemistry and Earth Sciences > Weather and climate > Weather and climate: For Teachers

The user is then able to either click on the link and go directly to that single link, or click on the topic or section which best serves their purpose and be taken to another list of links relating to a specific aspect of Myanmar.

Example of advanced search

If the following terms are used in the Advanced search facility,

- Exact phrase: *human cloning*
- Any of the words: *ethics ethical*

the results list shows links from a variety of locations within the database, for example:

- Philosophy, Psychology and Ethics > Ethical Issues > Stem-cell research
- Philosophy, Psychology and Ethics > Ethical Issues > Human cloning
- Australian Society > Australia: Law > Australia: Law: Stem cell research
- Life Sciences > Genetic Engineering > Ethical, legal and biological concerns

Users can click immediately on the link of their choice, or click on the Topic/Section title to gain access to many more links on human cloning in that particular Topic/Section, regardless of whether the term *human cloning* actually appears in the link title or not. The Topic/Section title gives the context of the link and so assists users in their selection of resources.

Sometimes, the same topic/section is found in different categories to facilitate access by users who use the topic list or are browsing through the categories, rather than using the search engine.

Deep linking/Persistent links

Teacher librarians can readily compile Electronic Research Guides using the deep linking feature found at the bottom of each page. Creating links from an Electronic Research Guide embedded in the Library Intranet Website can lead students immediately to the most relevant parts of the database. (This feature is currently network and static IP address dependent recorded on our system).

Selection Policy

Library Webs sites are always chosen from reliable sources

1. Personal pages are avoided unless the content is well-written, accurate and the author appears to have reasonable credentials, and other material is scarce. Personal pages with pop-ups and advertising are avoided.
2. Commercial pages are used when the information is well-written, accurate and intelligible to secondary students. Commercial sites with pop-ups and inappropriate advertising are avoided.
3. Resources are chosen to cater for various reading levels, so that students from year levels 7-12 should all be able to find appropriate sites in any section. Senior School sites contain information that has advanced vocabulary, concepts and adult issues (e.g. legal studies, some social issues etc.). Middle School sites contain information that has low-to middle level vocabulary, and has generally attractive and easily navigable layout.
4. A variety of viewpoints is presented where possible so that users are aware of the multi-faceted nature of some topics and are able to detect bias and point of view.
5. Sites which have been created by students are listed on occasions. If it is a student project, this is acknowledged. Students are able to see what their peers have created and be challenged to meet or surpass these standards.

Updates and upgrades

Library Webs are constantly being updated and upgraded to ensure that users are not inconvenienced by dead links and to keep pace with global events and local changes. It is the nature of the Internet to change, so there will always be some dead links. However *Library Webs*' policy of continual checking, deleting and correcting keeps these dead links at a minimum.

Personal service

The *Library Webs* team is committed to cooperating with teachers and teacher librarians to provide quality resources for Australian secondary students. If a particular topic is not yet covered in the *Library Webs* collection, a copy of the assignment topic can be sent to the staff at *Library Webs* and within a reasonable period, a list will be created which caters for these specific needs. The new topic is then included in the database for other users to access. Extra sections are added to existing topics all the time, so if an extra aspect of a topic is required, this can be arranged as well.