

# Taming the Web

...with the *Internet Organizer*



Course Instructor  
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Maine West High School

# Syllabus

## 1. Course Title:

*Taming the Web...with the Internet Organizer*  
MSE 5 IT 244

## 2. Credit Hours:

3 graduate credit hours

## 3. Instructor's Name/Originator's Name:

Course creator and lead instructor: Dan Fouts

## 4. Prerequisites: (if any):

Students must...

- ⊙ have access to a computer with Internet connection, either at home or at school-- 56Kbs or higher (Cable, DSL, T1, etc.).
- ⊙ A Browser (Microsoft Internet Explorer-IE, Netscape 4.0 or higher)
- ⊙ An e-mail address

## 5. Restrictions:

This course is relevant for educators (teachers and librarians) working in K-12 education, at any level of Internet skill. Those taking the course must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have a valid teaching certificate.

## 6. Rationale

The Internet is fast becoming the most powerful technology tool in the teaching profession. Teachers can draw on a huge array of web resources to find materials upon which to build their courses. Teachers can also find a variety of great lessons from other teachers who have created their own web sites. In addition, teachers can transfer information and communicate with students and others through e-mail, message boards, and chat rooms.

With the pervasiveness of new technology comes a need for training that is increasingly recognized at the national level. The National Center for Educational Statistics has found that "teachers who receive technology training are more likely to feel prepared to use the Internet to teach their classes." The "No Child Left Behind" Act mandates that 25 percent of money allocated to school districts be "earmarked for the training and retention of high-quality teachers." NLCB is a federal reform measure that will affect nearly 3 million public school teachers. Additionally, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education asserts that all new teachers should "be able to integrate technology into instruction effectively."

Unfortunately, most teachers are still intimidated by the Internet and thus unable to exploit its power. In fact, despite the advent of the Internet and other technological advances, the U.S. Department of Education reports that an overwhelming majority of educators (80 percent) feel unprepared to integrate technology into classroom instruction.

Teachers today are being challenged on yet another front. As technology moves to center stage, it becomes ever more important for teachers to collaborate effectively with fellow teachers, administrators, information resource professionals, and parents. Key national organizations like the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, the American Association of School Librarians, and the International Reading Association have articulated standards to promote collaboration.

#### 7. **Intended Audience**

K-12 teachers and librarians interested in re-certification credit, graduate credit and/or professional development growth units.

#### 8. **Expected Student Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ⊙ gather, organize and present online information to students and parents
- ⊙ develop a sense of mastery and comfort using Internet technology
- ⊙ apply meaningful techniques and strategies for integrating the Internet into classroom instruction
- ⊙ participate actively in a learning community of educators using shared online tools

#### 9. **Instructional Modality/Activities:**

Much of the material for *Taming the Web* takes the form of easy-to-follow instructional handbooks accessed at the beginning of the course. Teachers conveniently complete their assignments from anywhere, at any time, as long as they have access to an Internet-connected computer. Much of the activities require that they apply technology directly to their classroom situations. Students will create web-enhanced lessons using the *Internet Organizer* online tool. These lessons will be shared at the end of the course.

*Taming the Web* draws from three pedagogical approaches -- online learning, online tutoring, and collaborative learning.

##### **Online learning**

*Taming the Web* has been created in an online format so teachers can learn technology in a non-threatening atmosphere with a greater degree of personal control over the learning process. This control contributes to a feeling of ownership over their professional development. It also reduces the perceived pressure to carry out administrative edicts to “learn technology” without adequate guidance on how to do so.

The online model also addresses one of the most common concerns teachers express about participating in professional development: lack of time. Teachers in most states are now feeling pressure to complete a

certain number of professional development courses to meet both state re-certification and federal funding criteria (Education Week 2002). Online courses offer a great opportunity for teachers to satisfy mandates without having to carve time out of busy schedules for live classroom instruction.

### **Online tutoring**

Throughout the course, each student will be in constant communication with a K-12 educator who is actively using the *Internet Organizer* in the classroom. This communication will occur through use of e-mail and use of the *Internet Organizer*. With these communicative tools the assistant will help the students use their own *Internet Organizer* tool to build resources for the classroom. Help is pervasive and dispensed in a non-threatening format.

By providing access to an experienced Internet user who establishes a framework and direction for the online study, the course addresses the concern of authorities like Dennis Sparks of the National Staff Development Council who has cautioned that convenient, distance-learning professional development courses risk creating a “fragmentation and incoherence” that can “toss teachers and administrators in many directions as they complete their degree requirements.” Sparks goes on to say that good staff development programs must be focused on the formation of professional learning communities where there is a sense of togetherness within a school culture (Education Week 30). This dynamic peer tutoring model achieves this goal by promoting personal interaction and a sense of community between teachers that inspires further use of the Internet to enhance instruction.

### **Collaborative learning**

Students of this course will develop their skills of collaboration. Upon completion of their web projects, they will be taught how to present and share these projects with other students of the course. The purpose of sharing these projects is to instigate dialogue with like-minded professionals that will survive after the course is over.

The collaborative techniques featured in *Taming the Web* are consistent with the NSCD recommendation that distance-learning professional development programs utilize collaborative tools like team projects to maximize value for educators (Education Week 44). The course also builds on constructivist educational theory, which holds that new ideas and realizations can grow out of old habits of thinking (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). When given a chance to collaborate with colleagues, teachers can mature as learners and learn new ways to approach their profession. The course blends constructivist theory with technology in a way that inspires collaboration.

### 10. **Text(s):**

None—this course is all application based.

## 11. **Topical Outline/Course Content**

- I. Viewing the Sample
- II. Creating your own Virtual Field Trips
- III. Sharing your products

## 12. **Evaluation:**

Course participants will be evaluated based on their performance on the web projects assigned in the course. These web projects comprise 100% of the grade.

## **Bibliography**

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