
UNIT 3 USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND WEB-BASED RESOURCES

Structure

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand and appreciate the potential of various web-based resources for teaching-learning process;
- explore for more resources that may be available on the web but are not discussed in the text; and
- use these resources for enhancing teaching-learning inside and outside in the classroom context.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present scenario is characterized by a fluid movement between the print and the digital texts in the world of young professionals and children. They are not only at home with digital technologies but also enjoy using them for work. Keeping this aspect in view, teachers can also think of ways of using the web-based tools for teaching their students using synchronous or asynchronous communication. Synchronous communication allows for real time communication, while asynchronous communication allows people to communicate at her/his convenience. As discussed in the unit, synchronous communication includes forums, chats, whiteboards, and voice over IPs (VoIPs). Asynchronous communication tools include emails, websites, and audio and video streams. However, for this to have a successful run, one needs to have a stable Internet connection. If in certain parts, the Internet is not reliable, teachers can depend more on asynchronous tasks and where it is reliable, they may depend more on synchronous tools. This unit will acquaint you with various web-based resources available for teachers and learners. We will also discuss the use of these resources in class room context and outside the class context for making learning an interesting process. It will describe how teachers may exploit the

ubiquity of digital technologies to promote learning. This unit will also show how digital texts can be used for teaching in the classroom.

3.2 TOOLS AND SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

Internet is a global collection of interconnected network of computers. The internet is made up of millions of computers linked together around the world in such a way that information can be sent from any computer to any other 24 hours a day. These computers can be in homes, schools, universities, government departments, or businesses small and large. There can be any type of computer i.e. single personal computers or workstations on a school or a company network. The internet is often described as “*a network of networks*” because all the smaller networks of organizations are linked together into the one giant network called the internet. All computers are pretty much equal once connected to the Internet; the only difference will be the speed of the connection which is dependent on your Internet Service Provider and your own modem.

There are so many things you can do and participate in, if connected to the Internet. They include using a range of services to communicate and share information and things quickly and inexpensively with tens of millions of people, both young and old and from diverse cultures around the world.

For example,

- You'll be able to keep in touch, chat, and send messages, electronic files to colleagues and friends using Electronic Mail (Email), Internet telephony, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), File Transfer and Video conferencing.
- You can also tap into thousands of databases, libraries, and newsgroups around the world to gather information on any topics of interest for work or recreation. The information can be in the form of text, pictures or even video material.
- You can enroll for a course and attend as per your convenience and pace, offered through online (e-learning).
- You can do Research.
- You can meet your peer groups with similar interests and share ideas (interactive collaboration).
- You can stay up-to-date with news, sports, weather and any other current affairs around the world with information updated daily, hourly or instantly.
- You can also locate and download computer software and programs that are available in cyberspace.
- You can listen to music, do online shopping and even watch movies.
- There are also a growing number of digital libraries, Interactive multimedia games and educational tools.

To work with internet and to utilize the information and resources available on it, we use certain tools. In the following sections we have discussed some of the tools and services on the internet.

World Wide Web (WWW)

There are millions of sites on the **World Wide Web** (www) which are called **websites**. For each query that we put on the search engines, hundreds of website links are given. Generally, the most relevant to our immediate needs are the ones which are on the first page. To access these materials, one needs to take care of a few things.

Use correct spelling to reach the exact information.

- Use double quotation marks to search for words that come together. It is very useful when looking for a quotation. The search engine will return only those links where the words one is looking for come together and help you to narrow down your search.
- Use the + symbol if you want to add something to your search. For example, putting a + symbol between the words 'travel' and 'London' will restrict your search to travelling to London only.
- Search within a range of numbers: Put .. between two numbers. For example, camera Rs.5000..Rs.10000
- Compare foods using "vs": Type in "rice vs. quinoa," for example, and you'll receive side-by-side comparisons of the nutritional facts.

Search Engines

A search engine is a web server that searches for information on the Internet. There are a number of search engines available to Web surfers.

Sweet Search is a Search Engine for Students. Sweet Search has a limited number of sites for students. It has only 35,000 Websites which have been evaluated and approved by staff of research experts, librarians and teachers. Educators across the globe consider it to be a site with lots of information to help with instruction and have labelled it as the librarian of the Internet. Sweet Search allows students to choose the most relevant result from a list of reliable results, without the distraction of untrustworthy sites.

Some other popular search engines that we generally use are:

Google
Yahoo
Eureka
Web Crawler
Ask
Bing



Check Your Progress 1

1) Define the term Internet.

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2) Mention some of the uses of the Internet.

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3) What are web sites? Give examples.

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4) What are search engines? Give examples.

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Digital Libraries

The emergence of the Internet and the wide availability of affordable computing equipment have created tremendous interest in digital libraries and electronic publishing. The term “digital libraries” covers the creation and distribution of all types of information over networks, ranging from converted historical materials to kinds of information that have no analogues in the physical world. In some ways digital libraries and traditional libraries are very different, yet in other ways they are remarkably similar.

Encyclopedias <http://www.encyclopedia.com/>

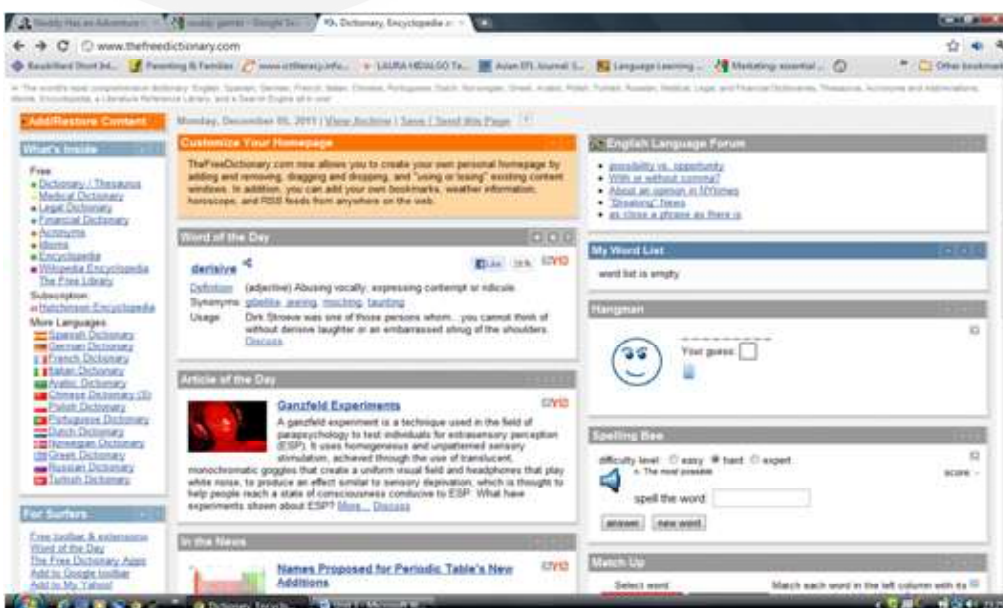
An Internet encyclopedia is a huge database of information that is available on the Internet and can be accessed via the World Wide Web. A number of such information reservoirs are available on the internet. Generally, the web pages can be viewed through software applications called Web browsers or high-quality search engines. Some useful links to encyclopedias available on the net are given below.

- Encyclopedia Britannica - www.britannica.com
- Animal facts encyclopedia - www.animalfactsencyclopedia.com
- An overview of countries of the world - www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/List_of_countries
- Encyclopedia with diverse categories- www.academickids.com
- www.encyclopedia.com/

Online dictionaries

- <http://www.yourdictionary.com/>
- <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Online dictionaries, generally, give you the facilities of browsing dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopedia, vocabulary building activities, quizzes, word of the day, most popular words of the day and the week, new words, slang, pronunciation, topic words that are related to particular topics such as art, travel, medical, and favorite words which lets you store your favorite word and evolve your own dictionary. These dictionaries may also allow you to create your own personal homepage by adding and removing, dragging and dropping, and “using or losing” existing content windows. In addition, you can add your own bookmarks, weather information, horoscope, and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds from anywhere on the web. Two screen shots are given to illustrate the point.





Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a multilingual, web-based, free-content encyclopedia project supported by the Wikimedia Foundation and based on a model of openly editable content. The name “Wikipedia” is a portmanteau of the words wiki (a technology for creating collaborative websites, from the Hawaiian word wiki, meaning “quick”) and encyclopedia. Wikipedia’s articles provide links designed to guide the user to related pages with additional information.

Wikipedia is written collaboratively by largely anonymous volunteers who write without pay. Anyone with Internet access can write and make changes to Wikipedia articles, except in limited cases where editing is restricted to prevent disruption or vandalism. Users can contribute anonymously, under a pseudonym, or, if they choose to, with their real identity. The fundamental principles by which Wikipedia operates are the five pillars. The Wikipedia community has developed many policies and guidelines to improve the encyclopedia; however, it is not a formal requirement to be familiar with them before contributing.

Concordancers

A concordancer is a piece of software which can be installed on a computer and also accessed on the Internet. They are extremely important if one wants to check language currency and authenticity because it can search, access and analyze language from a large database called the corpus. They are particularly of use for examining the collocational relationships between words and for exploring precise information about how language is used by the native speakers.

Most teachers generally rely on how they use the language when they teach rather than on a reliable source. They do not have the knowledge about the existence of such resources and they prefer to go by their instinct which may or may not be correct. Having access to a corpora of ‘real use’ language can be of great help in validating our assumptions about how a particular word or a phrase can be used and in what environments.

To search a word in a concordancer, one has to enter a word or phrase in the query section to search for examples of how and where the word or phrase has

been used. **British National Corpus** is one such concordancer to search for British English usage. **Coca** is a corpus of contemporary American English and the concordancer can be used to search for everyday usage of American English in speech or writing. A query of ‘taking tea’ was entered in both the corpuses and the result has been given below.

<http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html>

140 Even the wicked guardians prosper, and end up taking tea with the gentry.

2621 My beautiful villa — when it has been built I shall take my holidays there, no airport delays and no traffic jams, just taking tea with my little finger up and Dorothy Wordsworth on my lap.

2342 Taking tea at the Royal Show was a chatty affair for FWC members.

204 Lady after lady breathed heavier when Pen dashed in and out, and on the days when Wilson was a little late with the supper — which she now undertook to provide — on account of having been ed taking tea with Mrs Browning there was not a word of complaint but only a diffident enquiry as to how the venerable poetess had seemed.

384 The butler had left the dining room quietly, taking care to close the doors behind him, and proceeded calmly to the drawing room where his employer was taking tea with a number of visitors.

743 Chain-drunk with three heaped spoons of sugar in each cup and spent longer in the lavatory than anyone else, taking tea, cigarettes and the newspaper with him.

3234 And Preston trying to catch William's eye to share the wonder of it, for it was not the least of sensations to find Mrs Flaherty of Flaherty's Famous Furfair in William's nan's front room, taking tea.

849 hello, taking tea some time this afternoon.

327 Fifty people (the other thirty had disengaged themselves at the first mention of Dickens) were now taking tea in the gardens of the Albion Hotel under the shelter of parasols.

1098 of taking tea at Howards End.

3783 These included such classics as, bow stringing, shouting at the wolf, doing the Rapids City roll, French whispering, taking tea with the person and grooving on the inner plane.

3886 So it was that he escorted Betty there in 1986, taking tea in the Tiffin Room and enjoying a plate of fish and chips.

1	2011	ACAD	Commentary	A B C	resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His contributions to Commentary include " Taking Tea with the Taliban " (February 2010). # Over three
2	2010	SPOK	Fox_Beck	A B C	They're taking data points. They're taking my show. They're taking tea parties. They're taking all the nonsense said by the administration and putting it
3	2009	FIC	Bk:TreasureKeeper	A B C	tried to close my eyes and picture him in the cottage with me, taking tea with me every day for the rest of our lives. Our sons and daughters
4	2007	SPOK	ABC_Nightline	A B C	best reaction. " At Fort Riley, they even simulate Iraqi customs like taking tea and talking family for a long time before every business meeting. Afterwards,
5	2005	FIC	Bk:AmericanGirls	A B C	to the pubs in Scotland, clopping around Piccadilly Circus in high heels and taking tea every afternoon with attractive male journalists who flirt back and have
6	2005	MAG	NatGeog	A B C	wear pillbox hats and the operatic lobby buzzes with both new and old money taking tea . Recent visitors include Queen Elizabeth. Closer to Museum Island, t
7	2005	ACAD	AfricanHist	A B C	sites of dissent and disinterest. The inmate of the Mombasa detention camp found taking tea with his family was as representative of the colonial penal syste
8	2002	MAG	CountryLiving	A B C	radios aboard-passengers fall into a mellow rhythm, playing cribbage or writing postcards, taking tea in their cabins or sipping Champagne in the observato
9	2001	SPOK	CBS_Morning	A B C	: This is what's called a tea table. We're used to taking tea today, but that was something new in 18th-century America. Tea was expensive,
10	2000	NEWS	Chicago	A B C	banks of the River Cam, where students leisurely pole their flat-bottomed punts before taking tea and Chelsea buns at Fitzbillies cake shop. # Some 3 million
11	1998	FIC	Ms	A B C	room; I wanted to record the insights I had had while relaxing and taking tea . " Good afternoon, " Wallis said. His manner seemed to soften.
12	1995	FIC	Bk:FriendsLife	A B C	a resounding thwang next time she strolled into Albert Hall Mansions and found Eleanor taking tea with Duncan, the vet. He was leaning back in a tiny, uncon
13	1995	MAG	Horticulture	A B C	two-story affair from which you could gaze down and appreciate the overall pattern while taking tea or a light meal. No one knows who designed Colchester'
14	1994	FIC	etCetera	A B C	. SPOON: You wonder, perhaps, why I've come. While taking tea and Oreos, about a year ago, I caught a talk show hostess on
15	1994	FIC	Bk:Juv:MillersCrossing	A B C	what a garden it would be come spring! I could see Peggy Shippen taking tea there with this Captain Andre. A great sense of peace washed over me as
16	1993	FIC	SouthernRev	A B C	protect her prerogatives. Never once, in all the Sundays Mary had been taking tea at the house, had Agnes let Mary pour from the china teapot -- nor
17	1993	FIC	Bk:FarriersLane	A B C	And in the afternoons you would call upon acquaintances, or receive them, taking tea and cucumber sandwiches cut by your cook, and doing good works for
18	1991	FIC	Commentary	A B C	how to deal with a three-year-old. Tavy, Oscar, and Teddy were taking tea in the living room. With each day that passed, Oscar had become a
19	1991	FIC	Bk:Scarlett	A B C	to be doing something, making a difference, running things -- instead of taking tea from dainty cups with washedout, dainty old ladies. Scarlett heard barely
20	1991	NEWS	Atlanta	A B C	of place himself. His Oxfordian diction and faultless manners are better suited for taking tea with the British peerage - which he occasionally does - than for I
21	1990	FIC	Bk:NightsSummer	A B C	Name's Bob. " There was a message at Reception from Annabel: Taking tea with Mr. Quarle at the Ritz at four. Please join us if you can
22	1990	FIC	Bk:BethlehemRoad	A B C	or receiving calls, other than those of sympathy, so I shall be taking tea alone. If you care to join me, you are welcome. " The
23	1990	FIC	Bk:JtterbugPerfume	A B C	picked them and steeped a strong, green beverage in his bowl. After taking tea , they went to sleep again. This sequence was repeated numerous times, until

Email

Electronic mail, commonly known as **email** is an asynchronous form of computer-mediated communication. It may be considered as the most important of all Internet applications. It is a method of exchanging digital messages from one person to another. Simultaneously, it can be sent to one or more recipients. Email servers are used to accept, forward, deliver and store messages for the users. The users can access email whenever they have time for it. To access and use any Internet application, one needs to register, and have a username and password to browse that site. Having a valid email account becomes important as it is a required field while filling up the registration form.

Email may be used as a language teaching tool as it provides an extension to what one is able to do in a classroom to a venue outside the classroom. Email facilitates composing, sending and receiving real authentic communication in the target language both with other students in the classroom and across the world. Because of the storage capacity of e-mail, learners do not have to be in a synchronous classroom. The exchange of messages can take place at any time of day.

Users just have to log in to read, reply or compose new e-mail from anywhere they have access to the Internet. It is these spatial possibilities that help learners to spend as much time as they want to read and write in the target language in a real communicative context rather than learning only in the confines of classroom time and place. It helps in providing learners with additional input and output in the target language resulting in more interaction than was ever possible in the traditional language learning classroom. The activities that can be done using email are immense, provided teachers use their imagination. Real tasks woven around one to one email interaction, group email exchanges, and email with the class or between other classes or with independent learners outside the school whether in the same city/country or any other are possible as language learning activities. Some possible activities could be weekly email essay/ letter/ story writing assignments which are closely integrated into language teaching without losing sight of the content of the curriculum. However, in the context of large classes, sending individual feedback to learners would mean sending hundred odd emails which becomes difficult for teachers. To solve such problems collaborative or group projects would be more useful, as feedback would be limited to the group rather than to individual students.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Define a digital library.

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2) What are the uses of online dictionaries?

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3) What is a concordancer?

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4) What is an electronic mail?

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3.3 AUTHORIZING TOOLS

Authoring tools are also known as authorware. An authoring tool is a program that helps you write hypertext or multimedia applications. Authoring tools facilitate the users to create an application by bringing different media such as a text, a picture or a diagram, or an audio or a video file together. Materials from other electronic resources such as the Internet, and CD-ROM databases, can also easily be incorporated into an authoring package. Authoring generally helps in creating highly interactive applications in which the message is provided to the user and then the user responds by acting or commenting on the information. Authors who may not have much expertise are able to produce high quality smart and useful applications using multimedia authoring tools and incorporating audio and video content in their applications. Authoring does not require knowledge of programming. Content specialists need no programming experience to learn and use the authoring tools. Teachers with a basic level of computer literacy and some imagination can produce materials tailored to the specific needs of their students using authoring tools. Teacher-authored programs have an added

advantage because the teacher can control the content, keep the program focused and monitor the level of the exercises as well. Further these programmes have facility of immediate feedback to the learners.

Wida Authoring Suite <http://www.wida.co.uk/noframes/auth.htm>

Wida Authoring Suite is an easy-to-use authoring program specially written for language teachers. It enables them to create their own computer assisted language learning materials using multimedia features. The suite has the following facilities:

Gapmaster: It is a gap filling programme in which teachers delete some items (words/ phrases) from texts and the students are required to fill the gaps.

Matchmaster: It is an on-screen activity in which jumbled up matching pairs of words or sentences are given which learners have to match.

Storyboard: It is a CALL program that may be embedded with sound, pictures and videos and students are required to reconstruct the text and build up a story using the application objects.

Choicemaster: It is a multiple choice creating program in which students are provided with feedback on each distractor.

Testmaster: It is a test making 'question and answer' program that has flexibility of allowing for alternative correct answers and students can type in their answers.

Pinpoint: It is a program where learners are expected to match a short text up with its correct title. It helps learners to develop inferential reading skills.

Vocab: can help develop six language games and activities for vocabulary building from a list of keywords, definitions and example sentences entered by the teacher.

Hot Potatoes Web Authoring Tools <http://www.web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked>

Hot Potatoes is a set of six simple authoring tools which is free for teachers who are using it for non-commercial purposes. It helps users to produce web-based exercises of six different types which are interactive in nature. It enables users to create multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises and can be published on the World Wide Web. They are called

- JMatch
- JCross
- JQuiz
- JMix
- JCloze
- JMash

JMatch and JMix can also produce DHTML-based drag-and-drop exercises. Teachers need to enter their data – texts, questions, answers etc. – and the programs

create the web pages for them. The users can post these activities on their website. People taking those activities are given immediate feedback on the correctness of an answer. It is also programmed to give hints and clues.

3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS

Some very useful research tools sites are:

- <http://www.monkeysurvey.com>
- <http://www.advancedsurvey.com>
- <http://www.freesurveysonline.com/>

These research tools allow you to create web based online surveys or questionnaires that can be displayed to your learners / respondents. These surveys can be sent to the people willing to participate in your research by either e-mailing the survey link or entering it into your own website and the participants can be requested to follow the link to fill in the questionnaire. Generally, on these sites it is also possible to customize the survey pages. It is possible to change the colour scheme, put your logo on every page, insert hyperlinks, and much more! One can also save old surveys and create new ones. Generally, you can:

- create new surveys.
- edit unpublished surveys.
- delete old surveys.
- copy surveys (use them as the starting point for a new survey).
- publish surveys to the internet.
- allow or prevent users from taking your survey more than once.
- get the result of the survey that saves you the trouble of collating the responses yourself.
- make electronic forms for various purposes like gathering personal information or an opinion.

Your control panel lets you have a view of all your surveys, published status, the number of questions, and how many participants have completed each survey. You can customize it to send you an email, every time a participant takes the survey.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What is an authoring tool?

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2) Mention the uses of research tools.

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3.5 WEB 2.0 TOOLS

Web 2.0 is an umbrella term for developing social network applications which facilitates creativity, collaboration and sharing between users. With Web 2.0, it has now become easy for anyone to create, upload and share information than ever before. It has real time and live connection between the users. Now teachers have started exploring the potential of Web 2.0 applications such as blogs, media-sharing services and other social network software in education to empower students and create exciting new learning opportunities.

In the following sections, let us examine some Web 2.0 tools and their use in education.

Social Networking

Social networking has become rooted in many people’s lives across the world. Users learn to use these sites without much difficulty which implies their intrinsic interest in using these sites. This intrinsic motivation can be usefully exploited by the teachers. It may be observed that this motivation of learning to use these sites stems from a desire to socialize with friends and the facilities these sites provide for sharing and collaborating on various aspects of life. These virtual spaces are friendship arenas where users connect with each other willingly and are in an environment that is neither a one-sided teacher to student affair nor face threatening for learners. They get into the habit of expressing themselves voluntarily rather than being pushed by the teacher to express themselves. For these reasons social networking sites can be pretty useful for teachers as they enter a class of willing learners when they sign in a social networking site.

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/>

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites and has more than 800 million active users. Users are required to register before using and must sign in to use any application in it. On joining FB, as it is popularly known, users need to create a personal profile and then connect to other users by adding them as friends and by accepting friend requests. They exchange messages, ideas, pictures, videos by inserting hyperlinks to various resources. They are also able to create special groups where they can have threaded comments and discussions. Additionally, users may also join common-interest user groups that are created by friends, school /college employers. For joining FB users have to declare themselves to be at least 13 years old. FB can be used in many ways as an

educational tool as it is an engaging platform that meets the needs of teachers/ students to a great extent. FB being a popular site, we find most of our students there. We may say that students are already there, the teacher has to reach them. The first thing that a user does after registering is to create a profile. Teachers can use these profiles as information to write a passage to describe a person both in speech and writing. Teachers can also use comments, pictures and videos on FB for teaching to write meaningful slogans, comments, stories, dialogues and for teaching them to understand and notice genuine, real-life spoken language.

Twitter <http://twitter.com/>

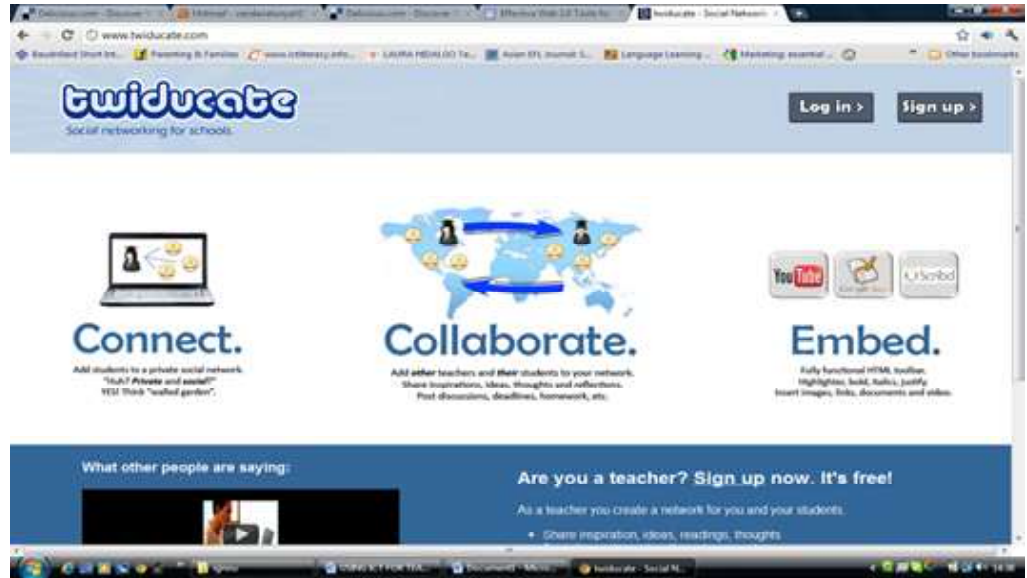
Twitter is a short message service of 280 characters or less for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected. Twitter is an exchange of quick, frequent messages. It is like writing your status on Facebook. But twitter updates are more meaningful and contain more information which may be relevant to the followers. People write short updates which are called “tweets.” These tweets are posted to user profile and sent to the followers. Following someone means you are willing to receive their Twitter updates. Every time they post a new message, it appears in the follower’s Twitter home page and they get the updates in real time. Every time the user logs in, s/he can see latest updates. Signing up for Twitter is as simple as signing up for any other social networking site and one needs a functional email account that can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. Teachers may use twitter by asking learners to follow them and they can post what they think would be good for their learners. For example, teachers can post URLs of important websites which students can follow to do a certain task. Teachers can devise writing tasks for students to write something in less than 280 characters and other students may be asked to comment on it in less than 50 characters. It can teach students to say meaningful things in limited words and also to think critically about what the others are saying.

Some Other Web 2.0 Resources

Twiducate - <http://www.twiducate.com/>

Twiducate is a website developed by teachers for teachers and is a free resource for teachers to use. The objective of the site is to construct a platform for teachers and students where they can carry on with what they started to learn in the classroom. It aims at creating a safe venue which is more educationally focused in a social networking environment for learners, teachers and schools. Teachers can create an educational network for their students where they can:

- Share inspiration, ideas, readings, thoughts.
- Post discussions, deadlines, homework.
- Embed pictures, links and video.
- Keep parents informed.
- Collaborate on work by providing feedback.
- Connect with students outside the classroom in a secure manner.

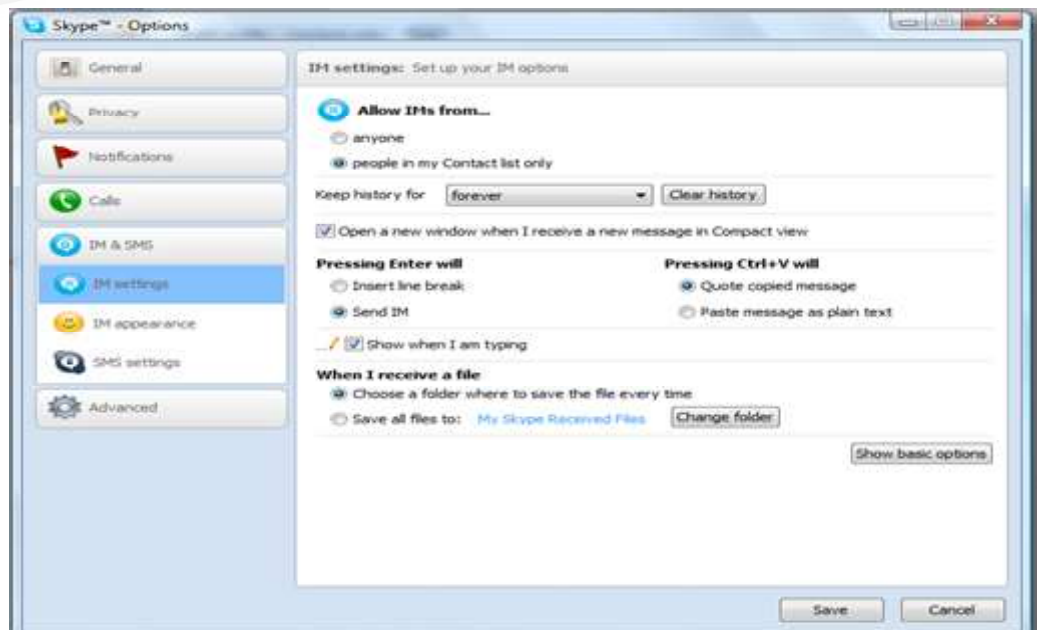


Skype <https://login.skype.com/account/login-form>

Skype is a digital communications tool that allows users to make voice calls to landline phones, cell phones on a small fee using a debit-based user account system and also make voice and video calls from one computer to the other over the Internet. It also has provision for instant messaging, file transfer and video calling, group video calling or video conferencing between more than two people and Screen sharing that matches the features of a whiteboard used in the classroom. It can be used with or without video and provides telephone access for people who may not have access to long-distance calling. Skype is a cheaper alternative to regular subscriber dialing for international calls.

Skype has also launched **Skype in the Classroom**, which is a dedicated teacher network. Using the Skype platform, teachers can:

- create profiles that describe their classes and teaching interests.
- search a directory of teachers from all over the world by student age range, language and subject.



- use the teacher search facility to find partner classes for a task on a selected topic and coordinate with them for synchronous activities using Skype calling, video calling, and video conferencing.
- use the “project” tab in the latest version of Skype when teaching using Skype. It allows users to post and search for projects that require collaboration.

Glogster

A glog is short for **graphical blog**. It is an interactive multimedia image. Glogster is based on Adobe flash elements. It allows users to create free interactive posters, or glogs. It provides an environment to design interactive glogs that look like posters, but readers can interact with the content. The user can embed text, images, audio (MP3), videos, special effects and other multimedia elements into their glogs and create multimedia online posters. These posters can be shared with other users on the Glogster site. They can be inserted in wikis or blogs, and shared via many social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Glogs can also be exported and saved to computer-compatible formats. Glogster EDU is an educational community that allows teachers and learners to use glogs as material for classroom instruction just as other audio-visual aids and also share these graphic posters in a safe environment of a virtual classroom. Glogster EDU Premium is a collaborative online learning platform where in learners have the liberty to express themselves creatively.

YouTube

YouTube is a very popular video-sharing website on which users can upload, view and share videos. YouTube has brought a wide variety of user-generated video content/clips from films, television and music videos. YouTube also has amateur content where they upload short original videos to the site and encourage people to put themselves up on the tube and indulge in a lot of video blogging. Unregistered users are allowed to watch videos, and registered users are allowed to upload an unlimited number of videos. Teachers can use this site for learning as videos engage students successfully if it is relevant to their lives. Video clips can bring in different perspectives or force students to consider a new viewpoint, helping to spark a discussion. It not only helps improving communication skills but also raises their thinking skills. On this site teachers may also organize their playlist according to some theme so that when one video ends, the playlist plays the next video without offering ‘related videos’, thus creating a curated environment for the students. Another important aspect is its storing and sharing capacity as a video can be viewed by anyone and can be used for various purposes such as language teaching, observing culture and cultural differences and concept teaching/learning as is being done in many smart schools in India. For language teaching a lot of *sound off-vision on* or *sound on-vision off* activities can encourage students to notice things and to use language for filling in the gaps of information, writing or speaking missing dialogues, listening to tone and accent activities.

Wikis

A Wiki is an online collection of Web Pages that allow the users to easily create, edit, link, and even track changes to the selected pages on the web. It is a tool that allows a multiple number of users to add and edit pages of a website with no

knowledge of HTML. Wikis also have a versioning capability that makes it possible for members to retrieve earlier versions of the material. Wikis in the hands of educators are tools that promote collaborative learning. Wikis are a loosely structured set of pages, linked to each other in a variety of ways and also to Web resources. They have an open-editing system to allow people to edit any page which makes wikis a suitable collaborative tool with people editing the content from anywhere in the world. The most popularly known wiki is the Wikipedia which is open to editing from anywhere in the world. Teachers can design tasks such as collaborative story writing in which learners could be asked to make changes to the story posted by the teacher. A time limit of one hour/ day or week can be given to the project and after that the wiki page can be locked for editing. Teacher can make the task both synchronous and asynchronous and give time accordingly to learners to edit. Teachers can also ask learners to write a story of their own on the similar theme to the one posted by the teacher. A speaking cum reading comprehension activity may be designed by the teacher which encourages students to prepare a speech on the topic they have read to be made the following day. Such activities will help students to acquire life skills of speaking in public and putting forward their viewpoint with confidence.

Flickr

Flickr is a free, well-structured space on the web. It is regularly monitored and is available only to people who have completed 13 years. The members on this site get an online space where they can upload their photos and other images. These are shown chronologically with provision for titles, descriptions and tags such as wedding, travel, shopping, etc. Anyone who searches the site with these tags get to view the uploaded images. It is a wonderful resource for teachers as they can use the pictures to illustrate what words generally cannot. The 'travel' tag pictures, for example can be a wonderful resource for the geography teacher to show to the students the locales, describe weather and also the terrain of a place. It is equally good for language teachers who may use travel images to teach adjectives, description of objects, people and places. The teachers and students can also be the members and manage their own 'photostream' and share with others for their comments. Teachers can also set some tasks for learners using the shared images.

SlideShare

SlideShare is an interactive Web 2.0 slide hosting service. Users can share their documents or presentations by uploading them either for themselves only or publicly in the PowerPoint, PDF, Keynote or OpenOffice file formats. These presentations can then be viewed on the SlideShare site itself, or be downloaded to laptops, tablets, palmtops etc. or can be embedded on other sites. SlideShare is a good way to share presentations, documents and professional videos. Teachers can design tasks where in learners find some relevant slides and embed them in their blogs, wikis, WebQuests, etc. Other such document sharing sites are Scribd.com, Issuu and Docstoc some of which can also be opened through Facebook.

Blogs

Blogs are again an important teachers' resource available on the web. They offer a range of interactive and collaborative possibilities to members. In the hands of an innovative teacher, blogs have benefit for both teachers and the students.

Blogging may involve users to unique kind of learning through what Richardson (2006) describes as ‘read-write-think-and-link’ activities. Teachers can involve their students in some kind of ‘collective writing’ in which learners read, add, comment and insert related hyperlinks to their creation and users support the task to construct the meaning together. Various collaborative class projects/tasks that involve pre-teaching, while teaching and post teaching, can be designed by the teacher in an individual blogging, group blogging or even class blogging activities. In pre teaching, learners can write their comments of what they think of the topic they are going to read; while-teaching may involve blogging on various topics i.e. by writing their comments, searching, evaluating related material (text as well as pictures) on the net and either embedding it in the blog or inserting the hyperlinks; and post teaching may involve a field trip to a related location and clicking pictures, studying related material and putting it on the blog. Teachers may also send the blog link to the parents of learners for them to see or even participate by writing their own comments.

Podcasts

The term podcast implies the ability to deliver specific content like other broadcast media. Podcasting is a technology that teachers can use for students to access the required course materials they can freely use at any time and place. To use a podcast, they do not need to be connected to a computer or the Internet all the time. Once the podcast is downloaded to the ipod or the mp3 player, it becomes any sound or video file that is stored and can be listened to at the convenience of the user. Through podcasting, the course content can easily be delivered in audio, video, and/or graphic formats. Podcasting has its own significant differences and advantages.

The advantages include convenience of time and place once the podcast is downloaded. Secondly, users can subscribe to a particular category of podcasts to get a regular and automatic download of new episodes. Teachers also have the facility to limit the podcasts to a particular kind of audience only i.e. only to students in their course. They can produce their own podcasts according to their requirement, level and culture. Once satisfied with the content’s appropriacy and usefulness, they can publish it. For teaching, a podcast could be anything in audio or video files. For teaching primary students, teachers can record birds and animal sounds for students to listen to and recognize. For older students, it can be short lessons embedded with audio and visuals, e.g., glossaries with sound and images, slides with voice-over explanations, audio or video case studies containing interview with experts or other speakers, multimedia presentations created by students.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) What is Web 2.0?

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- 2) What are the uses of **Skype in the classroom** for teachers?

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- 3) What is a Wiki? How is it useful to teachers?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have studied a variety of web-based resources that can be used in the classroom for teaching. In the hands of a tech savvy teacher these resources prove to be very useful but it is also to be kept in mind that technology may also fail due to various factors. Therefore, a teacher should always have a backup plan up his/her sleeve and it is not advisable to depend totally on technology. Further, technology should be treated more as a resource, the teacher being more important and how technology is tackled will depend on teachers. However, this note of caution should not discourage us from using technology in the class as children are very motivated when it comes to learning from web resources as they are using the web in every field in the current scenario. The web resources mentioned in this unit are very useful but the teacher should always remember that in such a scenario, she needs to work harder outside the class, prepare before she enters the class as it is important for her to be well acquainted with the tools to be used in the class. The authoring tools such as WIDA and Hot Potatoes to be used to create digital content will also require time from the teachers to create activities. However, once these are created, they might be handy for a long time to come.

3.7 HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Internet is a global collection of interconnected networks of computers. The internet is made up of millions of computers linked together around the world in such a way that information can be sent from any computer to others 24 hours a day. The internet is often described as “*a network of networks*” because all the smaller networks of organizations are linked together into the one giant network called the internet.

- 2) You'll be able to keep in touch, chat, and send messages, electronic files to colleagues and friends using Electronic Mail (Email), Internet telephony, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), File Transfer and Video conferencing.

You can also tap into thousands of databases, libraries, and newsgroups around the world to gather information on any topics of interest for work or recreation. The information can be in the form of text, pictures or even video material.

You can enroll for a course and attend as per your convenience and pace, offered through online (eLearning).

You can do Research.

You can meet peer groups with similar interests and share the ideas (interactive collaboration).

You can stay up-to-date with news, sports, weather and any other current affairs around the world with information updated daily, hourly or instantly.

You can also locate and download computer software and programs that are available in cyberspace.

You can listen to music, do online shopping and even watch movies.

There are also a growing number of digital libraries, Interactive multimedia games and educational tools.

- 3) There are millions of sites on the **World Wide Web** (www) which are called **websites**. For each query that we put on the search engines, hundreds of website links are given.
- 4) A search engine is a web server that searches for information on the Internet. There are a number of search engines available to Web surfers. Some examples are:

Sweet Search

Google

Yahoo

Eureka

Web Crawler

Ask

Bing

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The term "digital libraries" covers the creation and distribution of all types of information over networks, ranging from converted historical materials to kinds of information that have no analogues in the physical world.
- 2) Online dictionaries, generally, give you the facilities of browsing dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopedia, vocabulary building activities, quizzes, word of the day, most popular words of the day and the week, new

words, slang, pronunciation, topic words that are related to particular topics such as art, travel, medical, and favorite words which lets you store your favorite word and evolve your own dictionary. These dictionaries may also allow you to create your own personal homepage by adding and removing, dragging and dropping, and “using or losing” existing content windows. In addition, you can add your own bookmarks, weather information, horoscope, and RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds from anywhere on the web.

- 3) A concordancer is a piece of software which can be installed on a computer and also accessed on the Internet. They are extremely important if one wants to check language currency and authenticity because it can search, access and analyze language from a large database called the corpus. They are particularly of use for examining the collocational relationships between words and for exploring precise information about how language is used by the native speakers.
- 4) **Electronic mail**, commonly known as **email** is an asynchronous form of computer-mediated communication. It may be considered as the most important of all Internet applications. It is a method of exchanging digital messages from one person to another. Simultaneously, it can be sent to one or more recipients. Email servers are used to accept, forward, deliver and store messages for the users. The users can access email whenever they want though they should have internet access to receive new emails.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Authoring tools are also known as authorware. An authoring tool is a program that helps you write hypertext or multimedia applications. Authoring tools facilitate the users to create an application by bringing different media such as a text, a picture or a diagram, or an audio or a video file together. Materials from other electronic resources such as the Internet, and CD-ROM databases, can also easily be incorporated into an authoring package.
- 2) Research tools allow you to create web based online surveys or questionnaires that can be displayed to your learners / respondents. These surveys can be sent to the people willing to participate in your research by either e-mailing the survey link or entering it into your own web site and the participants can be requested to follow the link to fill in the questionnaire.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Web 2.0 is an umbrella term for developing social network applications which facilitates creativity, collaboration and sharing between users. With Web 2.0, it has now become easy for anyone to create, upload and share information than ever before. It has real time and live connection between the users.
- 2) Teachers can:

create profiles that describe their classes and teaching interests.

search a directory of teachers from all over the world by student age range, language and subject.

use the teacher search facility to find partner classes for a task on a selected topic and coordinate with them for synchronous activities using Skype calling, video calling, and video conferencing.

use the “project” tab in the latest version of Skype when teaching using Skype. It allows users to post and search for projects that require collaboration.

- 3) A Wiki is an online collection of WebPages that allow the users to easily create, edit, link, and even track changes to the selected pages on the web. It is a tool that allows a multiple number of users to add and edit pages of a website with no knowledge of HTML. Teachers can design tasks such as collaborative story writing in which learners could be asked to make changes to the story posted by the teacher. A time limit of one hour/ day or week can be given to the project and after that the wiki page can be locked for editing. Teacher can make the task both synchronous and asynchronous and give time accordingly to learners to edit. Teachers can also ask learners to write a story of their own on the similar theme to the one posted by the teacher.

3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Subrahmanyam, V.V. and Swathi, K. *Role of Web 2.0 in the Future of Education*. Paper presented in XVI IDEA Annual Conference 2011, Kakatiya University.

Some Useful Language Tools and Websites

Learn English Online – Within this free English learning resource, beginners will find 11 useful language units. Each unit features five lessons complete with text, picture examples, practice assignments, and tests.

VerbaLearn – VerbaLearn is a free online vocabulary studying site that works perfectly for learning English vocabulary words and phrases. Site visitors can

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learn and study words through audio, video, and printable flashcards and games.

MES English – Although MES English is designed mostly for teachers, this site features a lot of good resources that home learners may find helpful. Resources include flashcards, worksheets, videos, games, and more.

Word2Word – Word2Word is a huge database of resources that home learners can use to learn the English language. The site contains courses, translations, chat sites, language communities, forums, and much more—all for free.

English as a Second Language – English as a Second Language offers listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary practice for English learners of all levels.

Activities for ESL Students – This site provides English learners with quizzes, tests, and puzzles for learning and studying beginner to intermediate grammar and vocabulary. Other resources that can be found on this site include podcasts, videos, and games.

ESL Monkeys – The ESL Monkeys site provides a list of free online resources and tools that can be used on the web for learning the English language. Some of the most useful resources include lessons, books, flashcards, quizzes, videos, and forums.

www.sweetsearch.com

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<http://blog.findingdulcinea.com/2012/03/teaching-web-research-skills.html>

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<http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html>

<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

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<http://www.wida.co.uk/noframes/auth.htm>

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