THE INTERNET AS A RESOURCE: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

by

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Introduction

This paper is focused on using the Internet in the Classroom. Today the Internet is being used in high school classrooms across the world in many different ways. High Schools have curriculum guides that contain information on what teachers may teach or may not. Curriculum guides may include teaching strategies that teachers may use to teach at different levels. This paper presents the internet activities that teachers may use in the classroom to effectively utilize this new tool to enhance teaching and learning as well as imparting Christian values to the learners. Since the identity of Adventist educational institutions is of paramount during this era of Globalization, teachers or instructors using Internet as a tool in classroom instruction need to develop a Christian - value teaching framework and strategies for teaching effectively. The goal is that they become agents of the Master Teacher in the great plan of redemption.

Using the Internet

There are two basic ways in which one can use the Internet- as a consumer of already existing information, and as a creator of customized content:

Step 1.*Consuming Content*

While the most common way of locating information on the web is to perform a Google search, this often yields results that are too broad in scope. Hence, it is often more fruitful to begin your search through a site devoted solely to education, or so-called Education Portal. These sites have been created to help streamline your search for educational resources, and contain a wide array of resources applicable to every level and subject area. Whether you are seeking puzzle makers, lesson plans or subject specific web sites, portals are usually the best place to begin.

Step 2.Creating Content

Once you have located material on the internet, the next issue is how to apply it to your teaching. The most obvious way is to simply print out some of the materials such as handouts, maps, worksheets, etc, and distribute them to your students. Or, you can simply read lesson plan ideas and apply them in your classroom. A more elaborate way of incorporating internet content is to create a variant of what many call a "web quest" . The term "web assignment" or "internet assignment" is commonly used to describe internet-based activities. (Mcauley, 2000)

Rationale for use of Internet

There is a great debate about the use of the Internet in classrooms. Some people feel that it will be used as "edutainment" where students will be allowed to just play on the Internet. Others feel it is too unfiltered and allows easy access to inappropriate material.

It is important to note that the Internet can be used as a powerful tool to enhance curriculum instruction. However, certain criteria need to be put in place to make the Internet educationally relevant. Schools need to support teachers in their quest to integrate technology by providing appropriate training, hardware, and Internet access. Teachers must be trained how to integrate the Internet into their educational practices. With proper training, teachers will be able to open a whole new world of information and resources to their students.

By integrating the Internet into their curriculum, teachers prepare their students for the age of technology. The students become proficient at using technology, but beyond that they become problem solvers, researchers, and investigators ready to take on the challenges of the 21st Century.

Internet and the Teaching Process

You can use the Internet to add value, manage your classroom or improve the planning and delivery of your lessons. The bulk of instruction is delivered via the Web.

Web-Based Instruction tools

Web-based instruction has evolved from any number of computer-based instructional methods, often referred to as Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), Internet-Based Instruction (IBI), or Web-Based Instruction (WBI), that uses the World Wide Web as a repository for instructional information and the Internet as the distribution channel for the content.(Briggs, Gustafson,1991, p7) . The use of the World Wide Web (WWW) as an instructional tool is gaining momentum as more teachers, instructors, and trainers incorporate it into their repertoire.

Prerequisites for implementing Internet activities

In teaching using the Net, you have to convince yourself that using the Net adds something new, and value, to your teaching.

Below are some of the factors that are essential for a successful use of the Internet for teaching:

Knowledge and Usage of the Internet and its services: Many of the Internet projects require students to communicate with students from different states or countries via electronic mail or mailing lists or other news groups

Upgrading teacher's skills: You have to know the subject matter in order to teach your students and others. Since the Internet is a dynamic medium, you must train on a continual basis to effectively meet your students' needs regarding their Internet activities.

Availability of equipment and technical assistance: In addition to buying the equipment, the school or school system should employ a computer teacher who can answer questions on curricular issues and software usage, and a technical assistant who can address hardware or software hitches.

Supportive administration: The administration should be willing to provide time and money for in-service training, employment of a computer teacher, and for the purchasing of equipment. The administration should help in a positive way in solving some of the problems that may arise as a result of your using the Internet as a tool in your classroom.

Advanced planning: A teacher who does not plan how to teach a lesson is planning to fail, to paraphrase a popular statement. You should visit the Internet to look for sites, evaluate materials, and choose the appropriate sites for your class. This way you can be sure that the resources from the site support your curriculum goals.

Efficient use of technology: Students should be trained to use the available technology efficiently. For example, if you require your students to join a mailing list, then they must be trained to use e-mail efficiently and ethically and safely.

Provision of Web sites and Search Tools: You should provide your students, if necessary, with search engines to use for their searches. For example, you can restrict the students to only search engines especially designed for educational use. You could restrict the number of search engines to be used, or you can restrict the sites to be visited to only educational and government sites.

Adoption of an acceptable use policy: You should abide strictly to the letter of the acceptable use policy you have for your class. Some schools or school systems have developed acceptable use policies for teachers in their jurisdictions. If your school or system has one, be sure to use it. If it has not, it is imperative that you develop one for your class or school.

Genuine Interest in the Process: Nobody can be forced to use the Internet, or any technology for teaching. If a teacher has no genuine interested in the process, it is very likely that the teacher will not use the Internet effectively. In the long run, the students are going to be the victims.

Good Reward System: It takes a lot of time to effectively use the Internet for teaching. There should be evidence that the teacher's activities will be rewarded.

Benefits of Using the Internet for Teaching and Learning

You can use the Internet to add value, manage your classroom or improve the planning and delivery of your lessons. (Aiekan ,2000).This list is by no means exhaustive. There are other creative ways of taking advantage of the Internet for your teaching.

Motivation of the learners: You may want to teach using the Internet because you want to change, improve, add a new dimension to your teaching, or vary the types and increase the quality of activities assigned to your students. The Internet allows you to motivate some of the students with learning disabilities in your classes, and thereby accelerate the assimilation process.

Questioning and Discovery: You should encourage and provide your students with avenues to ask questions. Good questions by you can excite interest in a rather boring subject. Using the Internet for educational activities provides a different avenue for discovery through questioning, and for critical evaluation of information.

Improved Communicating and Using of Knowledge: Communication is a way of using knowledge. It is a source for re-enforcement. The Internet promotes fast communication across geographical barriers, and, therefore, gives students an opportunity to communicate early in life with a broad range of people not imagined possible before the class or course.

Well Designed Lesson Plans: The resources and communication capabilities of the Internet provide an opportunity for you to creatively design integrated lesson plans

and assignments that combine problem solving, writing, critical thinking, discovery, and exploration.

Class Management: You can post class lessons, homework problems, and practice exams on the Net for students to access from home, the library, or any place that has access to the Net. Parents can access the Web pages to confirm the homework problems their children are required to do.

Ease of Lesson Presentation: If you publish your lesson on the Internet, it allows you to color code or graphically present key concepts.

Access to Information: The Net allows easy access to information all over the world. It complements the library.

Interactive Activities: There are many interactive activities on the Internet for students of all ages. What could be better than students playing games and learning at the same time?

Cooperative Learning: The Internet facilitates cooperative learning, encourages dialogue, and creates a more engaging classroom.

Locating Research Materials: Apart from communication, research is what takes many people to the Internet. There are many more resources on the Internet than the school library can provide. Encourage students to take advantage of this wealth of resources on the Internet for their research.

Acquiring Varied Writing Skills: If students are required to publish their work on the Internet, they have to develop hypertext skills. These skills help students gain experience in non-sequential writings.

The Work Environment: Many businesses have Web sites and some require computer skills for employment. Using the Internet in the classroom makes it possible for students to easily adapt to the work environment, during school time or after graduation.

Drawbacks of Using the Internet for Education

The use of the Internet for education is not without problems. It comes with a price, which, if not properly addressed, can derail the learning process. It is pertinent to point out that the Internet is a dynamic medium, at least for now. (Norman and Marynne, 2000). Therefore, one should expect the problems to be encountered in using the Internet in teaching to be evolving as well. The following are some of the problems you may encounter as you consider the Internet as one of the educational tools for your classroom.

Plagiarism: Apart from Web sites that claim to help students write term papers, there are numerous cases of students downloading information from the Net and turning them in for grades.

Inappropriate Site: It is very easy for students to accidentally, and sometimes deliberately, visit inappropriate sites such as pornographic sites.

Student Privacy: Criminals, marketers, and other persons can easily get information from students when they are online. This could pose danger to students' lives or may even lead to litigation against the school.

Age Appropriate Information: Anybody with a Web server can put any information on the Internet. The levels of some write-ups are beyond the education level of most students, and are, therefore, subject to misinterpretation.

Low Income Groups: Schools with a high enrollment from a low income group have a lower rate of Internet access than schools with a low enrollment from the low income groups of the population. The same is true of instructional rooms in those schools. In addition, students from low-income families may not have computers at home or may have computers at home with no access to the Internet. Consequently, students in low-income communities may be disadvantaged.

Preparation Time: It takes a lot of preparation time to effectively use the Net for education.

New Administrative Responsibilities: Teaching using the Internet brings to bear a new set of administrative demands on the teacher and the school administration. These include development and implementation of acceptable use policy, training, developing new evaluation criteria as needed and addressing parents' concerns.

Example of strategies for a class room Internet application

In high school, students can access current and realistic data for use in classroom activities. High school students participate in collaborative online science and problem solving activities. In high school, students participate in live research taking place in the field, e.g. Mt.Everest Climb, Amazon Jungle Trek, Mars Mission. In high school, students contribute data from experiments collected at the school site to databases or data-gathering sites on the Internet.

Filtering the internet for safe usage

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making   the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)

The school should employ filtering technology in an attempt to prevent intentional or unintentional access to inappropriate Internet content. In addition, oversee Internet access through adult supervision. Even though the school may use technical means to limit student Internet access and provide supervision, these limits do not ensure a full proof means for enforcing the provisions acceptable use policy.

As educators, our focus should be on helping young people learn to use the Internet in a safe and responsible manner, in accord with high school standards and their family values. There are three categories of material: (1)   Prohibited material should not be accessed by students or staff members at any time, for any purpose. (2) Restricted material may be accessed by high school students only in the context of specific learning activities that have been approved by teachers or staff members for legitimate research or professional-development purposes. (3) Limited-access material, generally considered to be non educational or entertainment, may be accessed in the context of specific learning activities or during "open access" times (Nancy Wallard, 2003).

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

The guidance given by the Holy Scripture is embodied in the statement that; Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Good Internet habits are learned, they are not intuitive. Our stewardship of the Internet at school should be reinforced with good habits at home. Parents should establish rules for Internet use at home consistent with rules at school.

Pornography is being promoted through sites which reflect frequent misspellings of common site names or registering of alternate domains such as .net or .org, registering of abandoned URL's from formerly family oriented web sites. They create links which automatically launch other pornographic sites once one is encountered. Other sites focus on illegal, immoral, discriminatory, or otherwise inappropriate subject matter. Filtering tools assist in ensuring a wholesome Internet experience at home as well as at school.

Distance learning in cyberspace

In the beginning was the word--the printed word. In its earliest form, distance education meant study by correspondence, or what is now called "snail mail." As new technologies developed, distance instruction was delivered through such media as audiotape, videotape, radio and television broadcasting, and satellite transmission. Microcomputers, the Internet, and the World Wide Web are shaping the current generation of distance learning, and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and knowledge systems may be next. Some define distance education as the use of print or electronic communications media to deliver instruction when teachers and learners are separated in place and/or time (Eastmond 1995).

Typical audiences for earlier generations of distance education were adults often seeking advanced education and training at home, on the job, or in the military whose multiple responsibilities or physical circumstances prevented attendance at a traditional institution (Bates 1995). Now anyone is potentially a distance learner, a concept that has implications for the organization of educational institutions and for teaching.

Perhaps more than any other distance media, the Internet and the Web help overcome the barriers of time and space in teaching and learning. Educational uses of the Internet are burgeoning. Distance Learning on the Internet usually takes one of the following forms (Wulf 1996): (1) electronic mail (delivery of course materials, sending in assignments, getting/giving feedback, using a course listserv, i.e., electronic discussion group); (2) bulletin boards/newsgroups for discussion of special topics; (3) downloading of course materials or tutorials; (4) interactive tutorials on the Web; (5) real-time, interactive conferencing using MOO (Multiuser Object Oriented) systems or Internet Relay Chat; (6) "intranets," corporate websites protected from outside access that distribute training for employees; and (7) informatics, the use of online databases, library catalogs, and gopher and websites to acquire information and pursue research related to study.

Advantages of delivering distance learning on the Internet include the following (Bates 1995; Eastmond 1995; Wulf 1996): (1) time and place flexibility; (2) potential to reach a global audience; (3) no concern about compatibility of computer equipment and operating systems; (4) quick development time, compared to videos and CD-ROMs; (5) easy updating of content, as well as archival capabilities; and (6) usually lower development and operating costs, compared to satellite broadcasting, for example.

Carefully designed Internet courses can enhance interactivity between instructors and learners and among learners, which is a serious limitation of some Distance Learning formats. Equity is often mentioned as a benefit of online learning; the relative anonymity of computer communication has the potential to give voice to those reluctant to speak in face-to-face situations and to allow learner contributions to be judged on their own merit, unaffected by "any obvious visual cultural markers'" (Bates 1995, p. 209). The medium also supports self-directed learning--computer conferencing requires learner motivation, self-discipline, and responsibility.

As with any medium, there are disadvantages. At present, limited bandwidth (the capacity of the communications links) and slow modems hamper the delivery of sound, video, and graphics, although the technology is improving all the time. Reliance on learner initiative can be a drawback for those who prefer more structure. Learner success also depends on technical skills in computer operation and Internet navigation, as well as the ability to cope with technical difficulties. Information overload is also an issue; the volume of e-mail messages to read, reflect on, and respond to can be overwhelming, and the proliferation of databases and websites demands information management skills. Access to the Internet is still a problem for some rural areas and people with disabilities. Social isolation can be a drawback, and the lack of nonverbal cues can hinder communication. Although the Internet can promote active learning, some contend that, like television, it can breed passivity (Filipczak 1995).

The Internet as a Research Tool

The Internet provides both regulated and unregulated access to information. It increases the volume of legitimate data available to the researcher in addition to providing a wealth of primary source material for analysis.

Government documents, scholarly journals, books, newspapers and magazines are

but a few of the legitimate offerings available. Libraries, museums, and universities, as well as fringe groups and fanatics use web pages to disseminate their information.

Basic approaches to research remain the same. The library continues to be the traditional repository of information. It provides access to information in print and electronic formats. Often the library is the primary source because access to databases is controlled by site license, technological limitation and expense.

Librarians have engaged in bibliographic instruction in the library for years. With the advent of computerized classrooms, librarians now may visit the classrooms and share their expertise. They are able to work with instructors to show students how to combine traditional and electronic searches in their research.

Librarians and instructors who teach research using the Internet will offer the following hands on activities to dispel the myths: designing search strategies that facilitate effective use of search engines; accessing bibliographic and full text data bases available through libraries and campus networks; evaluating web sites for their intrinsic value as well as their relationship to other resources; providing guidance in designing assignments to maximize the use of resources and minimize plagiarism; and demonstrating techniques in downloading files to data disks, creating bookmarks, mailing documents, cutting and pasting URL locations and data.

The Christian teacher and the internet

There is need for awareness of unifying themes that have implications for almost every discipline of the formal curriculum, and for various aspects of the informal curriculum. Students should be taught that the ability to communicate using the internet is a gift God has entrusted to them. It is a talent to be developed for God's glory. They should also understand that communication is Satan's principle avenue for destroying the image of God. Truly, this avenue of instruction is freighted with eternal consequences, and if teachers do not integrate learning, faith, and practice in this area, they have no justification for calling their instruction Christian education (Rasi H comp.1992).

Teachers in secondary schools should have general objectives that help students:

- Develop pure and effective communication, both oral and written over the internet
- Reinforce good character formation through practice of compassion, courtesy, hospitality, carefulness, order, and intellectual honesty in learners through the internet
- Generalize moral principles from their reading, in the context of the great controversy, and apply these principles to their daily life.
- Formulate and use spiritual criteria for selecting what they will listen to, view, or read from the internet.
- Their work, ethics and attitudes should reflect a Christian character.

Listed below are some teaching strategies other Christian teachers have found helpful for integrating learning, faith, and practice in this area:

> Select internet sourced reading materials that highlight moral values. Discuss with the students the spiritual meaning of the stories.

> Help students develop criteria for selecting good material for surfing, reading, listening, or viewing from the internet. Study of the Bible can greatly aid in this search. For example, there are passages of Scripture, such as Philippians 4:8, which exhort us to think on positive things. Also, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 states, "Put all things to the test: keep what is good" (T.E.V.).

> Bible stories in modern language from Christian- based web sites or use a contemporary setting to restate a story and teach the same lesson the Bible author intended.

> Have the student use electronically-based Bibles, commentaries and e-books; read selected portions of Scripture or the Spirit of Prophecy and restate the principles in simple sentences. This activity can teach both English and Bible, and help the individual student consider the values conveyed.

There are a number of web sites available which can be a resource to the Adventist teacher, they cover all the unifying themes across the curriculum, both formal and informal curriculum for the different levels of education. A list of some of the web sites is provided in appendix A.

Ethical issues and responsible use of the internet

The legal issues in Internet use include such issues as intellectual property, privacy (almost every commercial website has a privacy statement), reliability and accountability, data protection, censorship vs. freedom of expression (pornography, hate speech, restricted data), Internet crime (i.e. hacking) and justice, information technology in the workplace (surveillance, control, empowerment vs. disempowerment, equity), terms of participation, and service agreements (Ornatowski , 2001).

Grateful to God for the advances in science and technology, we make careful use of their products, on guard against Idolatry and harmful research; use them in ways that answer God's demands to love our neighbors and to care for the earth and its creatures.

Guide lines for Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses of the Internet

The holy scriptures provides the guidance in this statement; "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, Whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior when using the Internet just as they are in a classroom or hallway. A Christian teacher has a responsibility of guiding the learners to develop ethics and right values for the use of the Internet.

Students are expected to abide by the following, generally accepted, rules of network etiquette:

- Treat computers and other technical equipment with respect.
- Abide by all copyright laws.
- Use family friendly resources such as approved search engines while searching for new sources on the Internet.
- Be courteous to others. Research and assignments should always be given priority over playing games and other leisure computer or Internet activities.
- Report accidentally accessed unacceptable materials or an unacceptable Internet site to a teacher, administrator, or other school designated supervisor.

The advice from the apostle states "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed , not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence. Continue to work

out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13).

- ❖ Do not view, send or access abusive, obscene or harassing materials.
- ❖ Do not access or participate in chat rooms, or multi-user environments such as newsgroups; download or play games (unless prior permission is granted by a teacher).
- ❖ Do not give out any personal information including names, addresses, telephone numbers or credit card information pertaining to yourself or any other person.
- ❖ Do not share your sign-on and password with other students.
- ❖ Do not engage in any commercial, for-profit activities. For example, no offering of or bidding on items on e-Bay, ordering from retail web sites, etc.
- ❖ Do not download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or discs.
- ❖ Do not copy other people's work or access other people's files without permission.
- ❖ Do not use the Internet in any way that disrupts the service or its operation for others.
- ❖ Do not tamper with or modify any software, hardware or wiring.

But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out (Numbers 32:23). Appendix B provides us guidance on this issue.

The Christian world view and Internet

Thinking from a Christian perspective about the information-saturated world entails far more than listing suitable websites, internet games, or chat boards for Christians to surf or visit. Jesus' approach to the situation is reflected in his prayer of John 17:15:

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one". Jesus did not come to create a world within a world, but He came to understand the prostitute, the leper, the criminal, and the crazy maniac and to sensitively, reveal to them where they were, the love of God and the promise of salvation (Fanderich, 1993 p55).

Jesus has not saved us from the world but rather to the world just as He came into the world, not to condemn it but to rather be a Friend of sinners. Developing fragile

Christians who live in a controlled, censored environment is not the answer to the sin problem. The approach suggested is, therefore, that a curriculum should be established in which various courses will be taught with the aim of developing Christian thinking about the world as exposed by the internet (Roy, Don C, 2001).

The clash between the world views conveyed by the Internet, the ambivalence and the double-standards needs to be compared with a worldview that is Biblically-based for the purpose of non-contradictory joy and to reveal that which is real, true and good (Phil 4:8, Romans 12:2). Therefore, order that comes from a Christian worldview and the ability to filter through the messages that are disseminated from the Internet are essential aspects of the Christian mind.

Virtues of honesty, diligence, reliability, and respect can be readily developed in an environment where people are using valuable materials, they are to get the job done, depending on the group for co-operation, seeing a job well done and having the utmost respect for the Internet connectivity hardware and the safety of each other.

Conclusion

Environment plays an important role in the development of the young mind. Christian teachers with skill and understanding can create a healthy environment if they are willing to teach people, not just skills. Young people develop great respect for teachers who can create an atmosphere for learning which is vibrant, full of expectancy, and well organized.

The Internet increases our ability to communicate as well as miscommunicate, and that communication should illustrate respect for others and personal integrity, for we are ambassadors of Jesus to the world. The Christian teacher through the internet has unlimited opportunities to develop within students attitudes of honesty, diligence, reliability and respect if the teacher recognizes the potential available in the creativity of young minds.

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WEB BASED RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

http://ict.adventist.org

The Institute for Christian Teaching pursues the following objectives:

- ❖ promote excellence--professional and spiritual--in Seventh-day To Adventist teaching at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

- ❖ To foster the integration of faith and learning throughout the curriculum on the basis of a comprehensive Christian worldview.

- ❖ To focus on the uniqueness, values, and implications of Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy.

- ❖ To stimulate research and publication in the area of Christ-centered, Bible-based, and service-oriented education.

http://circle.adventist.org

The Seventh-day Adventist Curriculum and Instruction Resource Center Linking Educators (CIRCLE) is sponsored by the NAD Office of Education. CIRCLE is administered through the Andrews University School of Education

located in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA. The website is hosted at Walla

Walla College located in College Place, Washington, USA.

The mission of CIRCLE is to serve as a comprehensive source for locating

the ever-expanding array of resources for Seventh-day Adventist educators

as they continue the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.
1. http://fae.adventist.org
The Foundation for Adventist Education, established in 2005, fosters scholarly activities that are based on the biblical worldview and advance the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The foundation promotes the foundational role of the Bible in the integration of faith and learning through conferences and seminars as well as through research and publication projects.
4. http://dialogue.adventist.org
This web site presents sample articles from prior issues of the Dialogue, which may be accessed by issue, title, and author, as well as by a particular section of the journal College and University Dialogue is an international journal of faith, thought, and action published by the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) in cooperation with the 13 world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
5. http://en.bibleinfo.com
Sharing the Bible is the purpose of Bibleinfo.com. Bibleinfo.com features brief, Bible topics, in-depth Bible studies, and the ability to interact with a Bible specialist by asking Bible related questions.

6. http://www.adventistchaplains.org

This website is intended to provide resources to those ministering to the students through the champlaincy ministry.

7. http://youth.gc.adventist.org

General Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Youth Ministries website
We live in the information age and this web site was designed to share our information with the youth of the world. Many questions will find their answers within the pages of this site.

8. http://education.gc.adventist.org

The following are educational resources provided for the
advancement of quality, Christian education on all levels worldwide:
The Education Department staff is responsible for the supervision, coordination, promotion, training, and quality of the global Seventh-day Adventist educational system.

9. http://cq.adventist.org

The web site helps in the provision of resources for Bible study Instruction and the related information necessary for the guidance of young people in schools and colleges.
OTHER RESOURCE FUL WEB SITES;
http://www.mhschool.com
http://www.enriche.org
http://www.science.widener.edu
http://www.thegraceacademy.org
http://www.school.discovery.com
http://www.funbrain.com
http://www.archives.gov

APPENDIX B

FACING THE INTERNET TEMPTATIONS

As Christians, we often face difficult decisions. That is one of the reasons why God gave us His Word, the Bible. There we can find principles to guide us in using technological innovations without letting them control us or lead us astray.

The Internet is a tool. God has allowed it to be designed so that, with the help of computers, we are able to communicate, learn, entertain ourselves in a wholesome way, and support His mission around the world.

You probably know more than your parents about technology. As a result, you have an even greater personal responsibility to use it in a way that will not damage your mind, your body, or your relationships.

In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote, "'Everything is permissible for me'—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me' –but I will not be mastered by anything'" (1 Corinthians 6:12, NIV). It's interesting that at that time Corinth was, for believers, pretty much like the Internet is to us, modern-day Christians. Within the city limits of Corinth, you could find many places to visit—some decent, some outstanding, and some that were really awful.

There were areas in Corinth that you could enter safely, without being accosted by peddlers offering you harmful merchandise—like on the Internet. You can visit sites that are safe and where no one will entice you with risky propositions.

Corinth was a progressive city, with schools and even a university. Paul didn't tell Christians to stay away from centers of learning, but advised them not to allow wrong ideas to dominate their thinking. The Internet provides access to vast sources of information, which can be used for your research projects. However, it is unfiltered and unverified. You must select your sources with care and discern their validity. You also need to be honest when using material that has been prepared by others, showing respect for the work they have put into researching and writing.

If you walked to school in Corinth, it was possible to pass by buildings where questionable or immoral activities took place. Today, when you do an Internet search, it is possible that something corrupt or immoral will pop up on your screen. You need to ask God to help you to resist the temptation to explore sites that will harm you.

Corinth also had some of the best bath houses of antiquity. Both old and young went there "to have a good time." The fact is that they were barely disguised houses of prostitution, with the added advantage of privacy.

One of the characteristics of the Internet is its privacy. You can be alone and access immoral websites that will cause you great harm without anyone knowing about it. You will receive intriguing invitations to visit certain mysterious sites or others that make bold offers of free pornography. In order to better resist the temptation of going to these perverted sites, don't keep your computer in a secluded place. Set it up in a public location where others can see what you have on the screen. You can also install electronic filters to keep those temptations from reaching your computer. Even better, ask God to place those filters in your heart and to build a firewall around your will. Paste a short note on your computer, reminding you not to pollute your mind with material that dishonors Him. (See Psalms 32:8; 101:3; 119:37; Proverbs 23:26.) Remember that you can delete pornographic images from your email or your computer hard drive, but your mind doesn't have a "delete" key. What enters will remain there for a very long time.

In Corinth there were public squares where people came to talk about many subjects. The group discussions were lively and at times fascinating. So Paul knew

something about chats. Chat rooms may be one of your favorite places online. You can enter these virtual spaces and simply observe what's going on or participate while concealing your true identity. Nobody knows what you read or wrote. But your friend Jesus is next to you when you participate in these electronic exchanges. Are you honoring Him in your communications?

Some young women get hooked on chatting by Internet with a young man their age who is great at sports, has money, and travels around the world. They may even receive a photo of this handsome new friend. However, due to the nature of chat rooms, this "friend" may in reality be an overweight 50-year-old man who is lousy at sports, has never traveled outside his neighborhood, is socially maladjusted, and has questionable or even dangerous intentions for the relationship.

Wake up! Your life is too valuable to run these risks. If you are struggling with Internet temptations or perhaps with a tendency to spend too much time playing computer games, ask God for help to protect your mind and your emotions, and to use your time wisely. He will help you.

Remember the wise counsel of Paul. You are free to visit any place in modern Corinth, but not all are beneficial. In fact, you run the risk of being manipulated by images and mastered by temptations that will ruin your life. Be careful!

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