ED477607 2003-12-00 Evaluating and Selecting Online Magazines for Children. ERIC Digest.

ERIC Development Team

www.eric.ed.gov

Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

Evaluating and Selecting Online Magazines for Children. ERIC Digest.. 1
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE POPULARITY OF CHILDREN'S E-ZINES..... 2
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN'S E-ZINES.....3
A PLATTER OF QUALITY E-ZINES FOR CHILDREN.....5
REFERENCES..... 8



ERIC Identifier: ED477607
Publication Date: 2003-12-00
Author: Lu, Mei-Yu
Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication Bloomington IN.

Evaluating and Selecting Online Magazines for Children. ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC

The introduction and growing use of the World Wide Web since the early 1990s has enabled readers to gain immediate access to great quantities of information. This, in turn, has prompted many businesses to exploit the internet as a medium through which

AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

to promote their products and services (Brody, 1997; Clyde, 1998). Publishing for children, especially online magazines (i.e., e-zines), is no exception (Johnson, 2002). The purpose of this Digest is to provide an overview of children's e-zines. It begins with a brief review of factors that contribute to the popularity of these publications, followed by a list of criteria for selecting high-quality online magazines for children. Samples of high-quality children's e-zines are also included in this Digest.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE POPULARITY OF CHILDREN'S E-ZINES

Compared to printed magazines, e-zines can be vastly superior in terms of each of the following factors:
"Cost": Both publishers and readers benefit monetarily from electronic publishing (Boone & Higgins, 1998; Freeman, 1996). For a publisher, an e-zine reduces the production cost. Also, readers do not pay shipping.

"Accessibility": Online magazines provide readers immediate and wide access to information (Boone & Higgins, 1998; Freeman, 1996). Readers with internet access can directly download or read information online without geographical restrictions.

"Timeliness": The online nature of e-zines helps ease the publishing process. Editors and authors are able to change, add, or delete materials readily (Boone & Higgins, 1998; Brody, 1997) in order to ensure the authenticity, accuracy, and currency of the information.

"Content": Unlike printed magazines, which often present information in a linear fashion, e-zines offer hyperlinks which allow readers to "wander around" paths related to the main idea and go beyond the materials covered in a particular article. Thus, e-zines broaden and enrich the scope of topics addressed (Boone & Higgins, 1998; Brody, 1997; Johnson, 2002).

"Interactivity and Reader Participation": A key feature of e-zines is the opportunity they provide for interactivity between readers, between authors and readers, and between readers and the text (Brody, 1997; Freeman, 1996; Johnson, 2002). Many popular children's e-zines now invite readers to be part of the production process, both by filling out surveys and by submitting their own work for publication in the e-zine. In addition, children's online magazines are able to develop and organize various activities that permit their readers to create artwork, play games, "ask an expert," and meet other readers online.

"Modes of Media Presented": E-zines make use of the internet's multimedia capacity (Boone & Higgins, 1998; Brody, 1997; Freeman, 1996). In addition to the written texts, tables, charts, and images traditionally used in printed magazines, e-zines expand

offerings to audio, animation, video clips, and other modes of presentation. The author is able to select the most appropriate media to represent his/her idea or to use multiple media to help deepen readers' understanding and enjoyment of a particular topic.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CHILDREN'S E-ZINES

While there are many e-zines available for children, their quality, content, and usefulness vary. The following criteria were developed based on recommendations from various sources (Abdullah, 1998; Agosto, D., 2003; ALSC Children and Technology Committee, 1997) in order to help educators and parents evaluate and select appropriate e-zines for children.

"Content"

* Information provided needs to be accurate, current, and relevant to the purpose of the magazine.

* Information should be age and developmentally appropriate.

* Information should encourage, inspire, and stimulate children's learning and imagination.

* Materials that promote particular biases should be rejected or reviewed critically.

"Functionality and Stability"

* The purpose of the magazine should be clearly stated.

* Advertising should be reduced to a minimum and be relevant to the purpose of the magazine.

* Navigational functions should be clearly explained and easy to use.

* The site should load in a reasonable period of time, usually within 10-20 seconds.

* Language used for instruction in the site should be appropriate for the intended readers.

* When possible, magazines should include features for special populations, such as visually or hearing impaired readers.

* The magazine should only include relevant, current, accurate, and high-quality links.

"Authorship/Sponsorship"

* The authors/sponsoring organizations should be properly identified.

*The editor's contact information should be available so readers can send comments or ask questions.

* Sites that violate copyright statutes should not be included.

"Design"

* The overall design should be attractive and conducive to the reading of the text.

* Graphics and images should be easy to read.

* Audio and video components should be high quality and clear.

* The font size, appearance, and color of text should be easy to read and view.

* Games and activities should be accompanied by clear, well-written instructions.

* A site should never request any personal information.

A PLATTER OF QUALITY E-ZINES FOR CHILDREN

The following is a sample of high-quality e-zines selected on the basis of the criteria above.

"Title: EEK: Environmental Education for Kids"

http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/index.htm By Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources; Monthly; for ages 9-14, parents, and educators.

Focus: environmental, nature, and outdoor education.

Features: resources for educators; career information related to environmental sciences; activities, stories, riddles, and informational articles.

"Title: MidLink Magazine"

http://www.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/ By SAS inSchool, North Carolina State University and the University of Central Florida; Quarterly; for ages 8-18.

Focus: all subjects, as well as current issues.

Features: cooperative classroom projects that link learners from around the world; resources for educators; Web sites of schools around the globe.

"Title: Parents and Children Together Online"

http://eric.indiana.edu/pcto.html By ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication; Quarterly; for ages 5-14 and parents.

Focus: reading, literacy, and information articles focus on sciences and social sciences.

Features: fiction, poetry, and information articles for children; resources for parents and educators.

"Title: Stone Soup Magazine"

http://www.stonesoup.com/index.html

By Stone Soup Publisher; Bimonthly; for ages 8-13.

Focus: literature and art.

Features: accepts children's art and writing work; pen pal program; teacher resources; archived sample stories, poems, artwork from past issues.

Frequency: 6 times per year.

"Title: Scholastic News"

http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/

By Scholastic, Inc.; Weekly (top stories change daily); for ages 8-14, parents, and educators.

Focus: current news and events, arts and entertainment.

Features: news stories, polls, games, quizzes, and news radio for children; resources for educators and parents.

"Title: Wanna Bet"

http://www.wannabet.org/

By North American Training Institute; 2-4 issues per year; for ages 8-14.

Focus: youth gambling prevention and education.

Features: accepts reader submissions; research based materials; ask the expert column

"Title: WireTap"

http://www.wiretapmag.org/

By AlterNet.org and the Independent Media Institute; funded by The Open Society Institute, Surdna Foundation, and the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Foundation; Weekly; for ages 14 and up, educators, and parents.

Focus: social issues and social activism.

Features: independent information source by and for socially conscious youth; accepts reader submissions; online forum; book reviews, movies, and albums.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, M. H. (1998). "Guidelines for evaluating Web sites". Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. [ED 426 440]
Agosto, D. (2003). "Questions to ask when evaluating Web sites for children and young adults". Retrieved on August 20, 2003, from http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~dea22/print.html

ALSC Children and Technology Committee. (1997). "Great Web sites for kids selection criteria". Chicago: American Library Association. Retrieved on August 20, 2003, from http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ALSC/Great_Web_Sites_for_K ids/ Great_Web_Sites_for_Kids.htm

Boone, R. & Higgins, K. (1998). Digital publishing. "Teaching Exceptional Children", 30(5), 4-5. [EJ 565 219] Brody, H. (1997). Clicking onto Webzines. "Technology Review", 100(4), 38-47. [EJ 544 700]

Clyde, L. A. (1998, August 19). "Internet resources for reading promotion". Paper presented at the 64th IFLA General Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Retrieved August 20, 2003, from http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla64/010-131e.htm

Freeman, A. (1996). Potential uses of the net for children's literature in schools. In L. Hay & J. Henri. (Eds.), "Proceedings of the ITEC Virtual Conference: A Meeting of the Minds 1" (pp. 44-47). Belconnen, Australia: School Library Association of Australia. [ED 417 756]

Johnson, D. (2002, September). Online magazines for children and teens. "Reading Online", 6(2). Retrieved August 20, 2003, from http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?HREF=webwatch /magazi nes/index.html

---

Digest #180 is EDO-CS-03-01 and was published in September 2003 by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication, 2805 E 10th St. #140, Bloomington, IN 47408, 1-800-759-4723. Full text at: http://eric.indiana.edu. ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced. This project is funded at least in part with Federal funds from the US Dept. of Education under contract ED-99-CO-0028. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the US Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the US Government.

Title: Evaluating and Selecting Online Magazines for Children. ERIC Digest.
Note: ERIC/REC Digest number 180.
Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Available From: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication, 2805 E. 10th St. #140, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698. Web site: http://eric.indiana.edu; Tel: 800-759-4723 (Toll Free).
Descriptors: Electronic Journals, Electronic Publishing, Electronic Text, Elementary Education, Periodicals, Reading Material Selection
Identifiers: ERIC Digests
###

—



[Return to ERIC Digest Search Page]