## *Chapter Twenty-four*
# Web-based Tools for Teachers

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In addition to being a rich information resource, the Web provides access to many time-saving tools for teachers. As faculty members, we have found these tools useful for our own personal productivity and instruction. Demonstrating teacher tools to pre- and in-service teachers is an excellent introduction to practical uses of the Web for classroom productivity. Use of these tools also promotes integration of technology into the curriculum. This Webliography identifies and describes key Web-based teacher tools/utilities in several categories: bookmark utilities, rubric generators, puzzle and activity makers, test generators, and survey generators. These categories were selected because they are potentially useful across grade and subject levels. Specific selection criteria are described below.

### Selection Methods and Criteria

Sites included were identified using several strategies. First, a literature search was completed and articles and/or tech updates were found that identified potentially useful Web-based teacher tools. We searched the Web using standard search engines and metasearch tools using the category names. Finally, pathfinder sites such as the "Teacher Tools" section of Kathy Schrock's "Guide for Educators" were consulted

(http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/edtools.html). When a tool was located, it was given several "test drives" and evaluated based on the following criteria.

The tools had to be accessible using Netscape® or Internet Explorer®. Sites that required free registration were not excluded because we assumed that the primary users of these resources would be adults (i.e., teachers). For the same reason, we did not exclude sites that were commercial in nature or that included advertising. Usefulness was assessed based on several factors: adaptability of the tool for different age/grade levels and content areas, ease of use, ability to edit or change the item, and ability to save created items (either at the Web site or on the user's computer). Finally, the authority of the site and/or the producer of the teacher tool was assessed.

## Bookmark Utilities

Bookmark utilities make it possible to access, organize, annotate, or rename Web sites through a bookmark or favorite format. These utilities share the common characteristic of browser independence. In fact, it is possible to combine existing Netscape bookmarks and Internet Explorer Favorites in all of them. Most are compatible with other browsers. The majority are independent applications that must be downloaded to the computer. This makes them operating system dependent, although the most severe demarcation is between Windows® and Mac®, as opposed to within those general operating systems categories. A few of the utilities are Web based, thus making them computer independent and adding a sharing feature not offered by the computer-based applications. For a wider selection, use other listings found on the Web (http://www.tucows.com/, search for the term "bookmarks" for many programs).

### Windows-based Utilities

#### Linkman
URL: http://www.outertech.com/, select "Downloads" and then "Linkman" from the listing.
Kind of Resource: Shareware, thirty-day evaluation license
Linkman is a complete "bookmarking" solution to store, organize, annotate, and check favorite Internet pages. It efficiently handles tens of thousands of URLs by using a database to store links and can call on many powerful facilities that replace the browser's native bookmark management systems. Moreover, it is easy to add URLs from all opened browser sessions. The user interface is highly customizable; many events such as clicks on the "Tray Icon" can be configured. Linkman also offers the capability to import and synchronize from existing bookmark collections and to export bookmarks in a variety of formats including IE Favorites™, Netscape

Navigator Bookmarks™, Opera Hotlist™, HTML Linkpages, and XML. It is even possible to build individualized Export Templates. Linkman supports all major Windows browsers.

### Compass
URL: http://www.softgauge.com/compass/
Kind of Resource: Shareware, fifty-day evaluation license
Compass is a powerful bookmark utility program with the capacity to manage more than a thousand bookmarks. The drag-and-drop interface makes it easy to find and organize bookmarks and to integrate all bookmarks from different computers or different browsers. What makes Compass unique is the power of handling the hierarchical structure of folders. Compass is not a bookmark manager, but it also is an "outline editor" or a "note editor." Personal journals, notes, outlines, memos, and so on can be created with this resource. It supports the three most popular browsers—Netscape, Internet Explorer, and Opera—and also any generic browsers specified by the operating system (Compass has been tested and works with Netscape 2.x - 4.x, Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x - 6.x and Opera 3.x - 5.x on Windows 95/98/Me/NT4/2000.)

## Web-based Utilities
### Backflip
URL: http://www.backflip.com/login.ihtml
Kind of Resource: Account for use, free.
Backflip makes getting back to stuff that is seen "somewhere on the Web" easy. It helps to create a permanent, searchable record of the pages that matter into a private Web page directory complete with self-prepared descriptions. Backflip also makes sharing pages easy. You can send individual pages or entire folders to friends simply by typing in their e-mail addresses. If you send a page, the e-mail will include a direct link to that page. If a folder is sent, recipients will be taken to your Backflip folder where they will find a list of links and descriptions. They then will be permitted access to that page until it is restricted.

To get started, visit Backflip and drag the Backflip It! link into the browser tool bar. (Mac users with Netscape need to drop the icon into the bookmark folder and then drag the alias onto the desktop.) The next time you come across a Web page you would like to save, simply hit the Backflip It! icon. A window will appear with that page's URL, its title, and a place where you can add your own description. You then can file the page yourself by selecting the appropriate folder from a pull-down menu, or you can tell Backflip to file it automatically.

## Macintosh-based Utilities

### LinkConverter 1.2.1

URL: http://www.elephant-place.de/LinkConverter/

Kind of resource: Freeware

LinkConverter consists of a set of four AppleScripts that convert single URL Internet Explorer links, Netscape bookmarks, Mac OS 8.5® URL link clippings, and AOL "Favorite Places"® links into each other. Just drag one or more link files or folders of links onto the corresponding LinkConverter program icon. The rest is automatic.

## Rubric Generators

As K–12 education and higher education move toward outcomes and performance-based assessment, different assessment models need to be developed. Rubrics have become one of the most popular methods of assessment.

### RubiStar

URL: http://rubistar.4teachers.org/

Kind of Resource: Educator developed

RubiStar, an online tool that can be used to create customized rubrics, is developed and maintained by the High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium. An online tutorial describing the process is available. To create a rubric, the user selects from a project category: oral projects, products, multimedia, science, research and writing, work skills, and math. In addition to creating a printable rubric, rubrics are also stored at the RubiStar site and can be edited or modified at a later time. Project Based Learning: Checklists is another useful resource from the High Plains Consortium (http://www.4teachers.org/projectbased/checklist.shtml).

### University of Northern Iowa, Professional Development: Rubrics

URL: http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml

This resource includes an extensive set of links to background readings on authentic assessment. The links to sample rubrics are organized into different assessment areas: cooperative learning rubrics, report rubrics, oral presentation rubrics, project/multimedia/Web page rubrics, and create a rubric. Teacher developed rubrics are featured.

### Rona's Teacher Tools: Rubrics

URL: http://www.rubrics4teachers.com/

Kind of Resource: Educator developed

This site is organized into several general topic areas: What is a rubric?; rubric generators; ready-made rubrics; featured rubric sites; and discounted books on rubrics. The section of ready-made rubrics is organized by grade and topic area. Many of these

links take you to rubrics created as part of WebQuests, so it is possible to see the entire WebQuest as well as the rubric.

### *MidLink Magazine: Teacher Resource Room, Rubrics and Evaluation Resources*
URL: http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/ho.html
Kind of Resource: Educator developed
This site provides general and multimedia project rubric templates as downloadable Excel spreadsheets (zipped for faster downloading). This useful approach frees teachers from the Web access required to use other tools. Links to other sample rubrics also are included.

## Puzzle and Activity Makers
These sites have been available on the Web for several years, and they remain popular with teachers. Most of the sites allow users to create printable puzzles and activities; other sites allow the creation of puzzles that students complete online.

### *Puzzlemaker*
URL: http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com
Kind of Resource: Commercial Web site developed
The Discovery School's Puzzlemaker provides a wealth of options for teachers looking to incorporate puzzles into the curriculum. Crossword puzzles, mazes, math squares, and cryptograms are among the options. The directions are clear and easy to follow. The template for each puzzle provides step-by-step instructions with boxes to insert puzzle information. In addition, clip art can be added to the puzzle from a collection of more than 150 clip art images.

### *Worksheet Generator*
URL: http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/worksheetgenerator/
Kind of Resource: Commercial site-developed
Worksheet Generator, also part of the Discovery School Website, provides templates for teachers to create worksheets. Vocabulary worksheet options include: Fill in the Blank, Matching, Mix Up, Multiple Choice, Scramble, and Word Chop. The templates for math worksheets include Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and FOIL for creating random equation problems. In addition, the site contains more than three hundred ready-made worksheets covering all major subject areas.

### *Scholastic Teacher Resource Center*
URL: http://teacher.scholastic.com/
Kind of Resource: Publisher developed

Scholastic offers a Website for pre K–2 teachers that has lesson plans and prepared activities. The main resources page is easy to use and provides the option of searching for resources on reading/language arts, social studies, science, and math. In addition, the site offers excellent online activities (http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/index.htm).

### *edHelper.com*
URL: http://www.edhelper.com/
Kind of Resource: Commercial
This Web site offers a few educational resources for free, including a crossword puzzle maker, a spelling worksheet generator, and a word find generator. One nice feature is that it is possible to request the inclusion of SAT practice words that are automatically added to a puzzle. Access to the complete Web site costs $19.99 for an annual subscription to either grades 1–8 or grades 9–12. The site offers more than 10,000 lesson plans, 1,200 WebQuests, 5,000 free worksheets, and 1,600 word and critical thinking problems. In addition, the site provides puzzle makers for vocabulary, spelling, math, and critical thinking. The home page lists categories based on subject area or themes.

## Test Generators
Creating online tests and quizzes is a fairly new application of Web-based technologies. These Web sites offer teachers many different options for creating printable as well as online tests.

### *Quiz Center*
URL: http://school.discovery.com/quizcenter/quizcenter.html
Kind of Resource: Commercial, free
Quiz Center is another great teacher tool from Discovery School. It is free and offers a wonderful range of options for teachers wishing to use an online tool to create quizzes. Teachers can select short answer, true/false, essay, multiple choice, or a combination of these formats when creating a quiz. Other features include automatic quiz correction, privacy protection, and file management. The template for creating quizzes is straightforward and very user-friendly. In addition, teachers can incorporate graphics for quiz questions that require visuals.

### *Quia*
URL: http://www.quia.com/
Kind of Resource: Commercial, subscription, thirty-day free trial
Quia is a commercial site that offers an extensive collection of educational tools and

templates. You can create fourteen types of games, activities, and quizzes with eight different question types, and surveys. The template designs are user-friendly and offer great variety. Current subscription rates for individuals are $49.00/year and provide access to activities, quizzes, quiz administration and reporting tools, class Web pages, and free access to activities for all the of the subscriber's students.

### Quiz Star HPR*TEC
URL: http://quiz.4teachers.org/
Kind of Resource: Educator developed, fee.
The High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium provides an excellent free resource for creating a custom quiz that students can take online. Teachers can create multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer quizzes. The site provides several important options for designing a quiz. For example, teachers can be notified by e-mail when a student completes a quiz, tests can be activated so they are only available for certain dates, students can receive feedback on their responses, questions can be randomized for each test, and a time limit can be established for each test. This is new version of QuizStar that includes many improvements and new features.

## Survey Generators
Surveys are popular data collection tools with many opportunities for use in a K–12 environment. Properly developed, survey tools can guide all aspects of school from needs assessment to student assessment to program evaluation. School professionals can use survey data collection to show demographics, perceptions, or accomplishment.

### Zoomerang
URL: http://www.zoomerang.com/
Kind of Resource: Commercial, free and for subscription. Varies by status: Educators, Non profit, Business have different fees.
Zoomerang's Web-based service provides the tools to gather and analyze feedback on almost any subject. Step-by-step instructions guide the experience; no advanced skills are needed. After sending a survey, real-time results are received in a secure and private environment. The same input-gathering methods used by multinational corporations now put real answers at your command—in real time. Zoomerang comes in a free version and an enhanced version. The free version will suit most educators and includes twenty questions per survey, ability to create surveys from template only, limited analysis capability, reporting on maximum of fifty responses, and storage of survey data for ten days. The enhanced version includes thirty questions per survey, images in surveys, reporting on unlimited responses, extended survey data storage, cross-tabulated responses, and shared and downloadable results.

Here's how Zoomerang works:
- Use a Web browser to select a professionally designed survey template from one of several categories.  http://www.backflip.com/login.ihtml
- Customize or rewrite the templates; adjust color and graphic design as you wish.
- Choose from a list of supplied, qualified respondents (Panelists) or enter your own e-mail list.
- Launch your surveys with a personalized greeting to each Panelist.
- Respondents can earn valuable awards for filling in surveys and returning their results.
- Through the Web browser, survey creators can review the results presented in a variety of powerful graphic forms.

### *Profiler*
URL: http://www.profilerpro.com/
Kind of Resource: Educator prepared
Profiler's Web-based instruments inspire cooperation and collaboration among teachers to help them improve their skills and knowledge of technology topics. Profiler may strengthen a school district's ability to share expertise. Taking a survey to assess district technology abilities may help to find someone who can help strengthen these skills within a school. To create a survey, just choose the type of survey you would like to use from Profiler's survey bank. The most useful seem to be a Basic Skills Checklist that will help assess the basic technology skills of your group. Use it or modify it to meet your needs. In addition, choose from preapproved ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) surveys for preservice and professional teachers. Creating a custom survey is easy by either inputting a survey created elsewhere or creating one from scratch. You can use questions from the Profiler question banks, including the ISTE question bank. As  of December 2005, data will be maintained on the Profilerpro server for thrity days.

### *SurveyBuilder*
URL:  http://surveybuilder.edmin.com/main.cfm
Kind of Resource: Commercial
SurveyBuilder allows you to create, edit, and manage custom surveys on the Internet. You can create a survey for any type of question, including text, multiple choice, and number answers. When the survey is finished, an URL is generated. This URL can be e-mailed either manually or from a constructed list with an invitation to take the survey. Surveys can be sent to specific groups or collected anonymously. Basic analysis is provided. This has few frills, but much flexibility.

*StatPac Survey Software*
URL: http://www.statpac.com/
Kind of Resource: Commercial
StatPac handles every step of a research project from questionnaire design to statistical analysis reports. It enables the design and development of customer satisfaction surveys and employee surveys, public opinion polling, human resources, and program evaluation for healthcare and nonprofit agencies. Its capabilities include questionnaire design, sample selection, written questionnaire forms, telephone interviewing, Internet, and e-mail surveys. It has an integrated statistical analysis reporting system that includes basic and advanced multivariate statistics with flexible table formatting.

StatPac is known for its outstanding frequencies, cross-tabs, and banner tables. Customer satisfaction surveys and employee surveys are usually reported in banner tables that show respondents' attitudes broken down by other strategically important variables. You can download a free version.

*Texas Center for Educational Technology*
URL: http://www.tcet.unt.edu/START/assess/tools.htm
Kind of Resource: Educator prepared
This resource provides multiple links to technology assessment tools.

*All URLs are current as of April 18, 2006.*