Help ! Where Can I Find It ?

Ajarn James Staley

Help! Where Can I Find It?

Ajarn James Staley

Often at the onset of a new semester, a teacher will be asked to teach a class in which he/she has no prior experience. With good material readily available, a course description and an existing course outline this task should not seem insurmountable. However, lacking either of the three, a situation can easily develop in which no teacher wants to find himself.

In October 2000, a week before the new semester was to begin, I found myself just in this situation. Among the five different subjects I was assigned to teach, there was one called "English for Public Speaking". My first reaction was to ask myself, "What do you know about public speaking?" Immediately I had to correct myself and ask, "What do you know about **teaching** public speaking?" After the initial despair incurred by trying to answer the questions, which should have been better left unasked, I began with the job of finding suitable material and making a course outline. The first class was less than a week away and the clock was ticking!

First I looked around on my desk, bulging with books and reference materials, which usually yield some starting point for just about any question imaginable; this time I drew a blank. There was just not even a footnote about public speaking. A quick trip to the next room and a look into our resource cabinet, filled with assorted English grammar books and specialty volumes with titles like, "Basic Writing in English for Science & Technology", "The Parent's Guide to Storytelling", Idioms in Practice", or "Peace Tales", convinced me that they would not yield the information about public

volumes stacked to the ceiling, could not help me in my quest for information about teaching a class in public speaking.

What was the next step? It looked like a good time to play my last remaining trump card and turn to the Internet, and in retrospect, it may have been a much better and more timesaving idea to have started my search there. The Internet is such an important source of information and so many of the "older generation" have resisted the temptations of the "most important scientific tool of the 20th century" that I wanted to dedicate this article to a brief history and short information about it. It should not surprise anyone that most of the information for my article came from—the Internet!

Just what is the Internet and what can it be for you? According to Cyberweb:

- It is a set of computers talking over fiber optics, phone lines, satellite links and other media.

- It is an ocean of education and resources awaiting to be mined.

- It is a place of fun and entertainment.

- It is a place where you can talk to your family and friends around the world.

- It is a place to do research for your thesis or a business presentation.

- It is unlimited commercial opportunity.

- It is a worldwide support group for any problem or need.

- It is a gold mine of professionals in all fields sharing information about their work.

- It is hundreds of libraries and archives that will open to your fingertips.

- It is the technology of the future which help make our lives, and those of our children, brighter.

Help! Where Can I find it
Ajarn James Staley

177

More technically speaking, the Internet, or the Information Superhighway, as it has become to be known after a speech in 1991 by (at that time) Senator Al Gore, is a network of computer networks joined globally; they are linked together in a way that they can all communicate with each other and share and/or transmit information globally. The beginnings of the Computer Era go back about 40 years and the roots of the Internet can be found in certain defense strategies implemented in the United States at that time.

It is hard to believe that the Internet, this wonderful technical system, could have developed from a tactic of the Cold War but that is exactly its origins. At the end of World War II, the Russians and the US moved further and further apart in their ideology and at various times military confrontation seemed imminent. During the height of the Cold War, in the 1950's, the US Government thought it strategically necessary to construct a system of interstate highways linking major cities all across the country. It was also during this time that the military began to decentralize its command and set up alternative command centers at various points across the nation.

The idea behind inter-connecting cities and decentralization was that should one city or center be destroyed in an enemy attack, aid, troops, supplies, etc., could be transported quickly and effectively along alternative routes. The physical aspects of networking the country thus being covered during the decade of the 50's and mid 60's, led to the idea of the necessity of a secure and safe information-transfer system. The military had recognized that should the flow of information and thus the chain of command fail, all other defense preparations would have been of little use.

This physical structure of the interstate highways became the central idea and the forerunner of the modern Internet system. The government set up large mainframe computers at various points in the country and set about linking them. Defense functions were decentralized such that any large computer could run the programs independently. It was in 1969 that the Department of Defense created ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency) which was later to be the Internet.

According to Forthnet:
"The Internet's pace of growth in the early 1990's is spectacular, almost ferocious. It is spreading faster than cellular phones, faster than fax ma-

chines. Last year the Internet was growing at a rate of twenty percent a month. The number of "host" machines with direct connection to TCP/IP has been doubling every year since 1988. The Internet is moving out of its original base in military and research institutions, into elementary and high schools, as well as into public libraries and the commercial sector.

"Why do people want to be on the Internet?" One of the main reasons is simple freedom. The Internet is a rare example of a true, modern, functional anarchy. There is no "Internet Inc." There are no official censors, no bosses, no board of directors, no stockholders. In principle, any node can speak as a peer to any other node, as long as it obeys the rules of the TCP/IP protocols, which are strictly technical, not social or political. (There has been some struggle over commercial use to the Internet, but that situation is changing as businesses supply their own links.)

"The Internet is also a bargain. The Internet as a whole, unlike the phone system, doesn't charge for long-distance service. And unlike most commercial computer networks, it doesn't charge for access time, either. In fact the "Internet" itself, which doesn't even officially exist as an entity, never "charges" for anything. Each group of people accessing the Internet is responsible for their own machine and their own section of line."

Personally, I never thought of being able to compare the Internet with the English language, except when you think about it, they are both very complex and difficult to learn! When I read the following description from Fortnet I thought it good to pass on to the English Department at Rajabhat. It explains about the ownership or the rights to the Internet system.

"The Internet's "anarchy" may seem strange or even unnatural but it makes a certain deep and basic sense. It's rather like the "anarchy of the English language. Nobody rents English, and nobody owns English. As an English-speaking person, it's up to you to learn how to speak English properly and make whatever use you please of it (though the government provides certain subsidies to help you learn to read and write a bit). Otherwise, everybody just sort of pitches in, and somehow the thing evolves on its own, and somehow turns out workable. And interesting. Fascinating, even. Though a lot of people earn their living from using and exploiting and teaching English, "English" as an institution is public property, a public good. Much the same

goes for the Internet. Would English be improved if the "The English Language, Inc." had a board of directors and a chief executive officer, or a President and a Congress? There'd probably be a lot fewer new words in English and a lot fewer new ideas.

"People on the Internet feel much the same way about their own institution. It's an institution that resists institutionalization. The Internet belongs to everyone and no one."

But what can the Internet do for you and what can you do with the Internet? There are four basic areas of usage for the net, mail, special interest groups, file-sharing and long-distance computing.

Everyone should be familiar with e-mail if he/she lives on Planet Earth and is still able to think! Electronic mail is just as easy as typing a few lines and hitting the "send" button. It is cheap, convenient and instantaneous, allowing your correspondent to respond to your mail just as quickly as you sent it. Pictures and files can be easily attached to e-mails, making your correspondence more interesting, exact and enjoyable.

Newsgroups offer participants information, different opinions and the chance to express their ideas and beliefs to an audience of millions! There are already hundreds of special Internet groups for any special interest field one can think of. Just try one of the search engines to find a topic that you are interested in. Chances are you are not alone!

File transfers allow one to access their own files and/or public files from any point on the globe. The same files can be transferred via the mail system to any e-mail address and be accessed from any point on the globe.

Long-distance computing was the original idea of the founders of the modern Internet system. They envisioned scientists and laymen being able to access information from distant points of the globe. Their vision included the same scientists writing information and making it available to the general public and of vast resources locked away in libraries becoming available to everyone. This is the situation of today.

This brings me back to the search for suitable information for my "Public

Speaking" class. Where to find it? Well, there are many "search engines" in place in the Internet. Some of the most easily recognized are:

www.yahoo.com
www.altavista.com
www.searchalot.com

One that I particularly like is www.metacrawler.com which uses about a dozen other search engines to find the most information available. This search engine also gives you three options during the search. It can find websites that contain "any" part of your search criteria or websites which are chosen only if they contain "all" the criteria for which you are looking. The third option is the "phrase" option which will only report sites which contain the exact phrase you are looking for. This is especially handy if you have a book title or are looking for some specific information like, "English for Public Speaking".

Whichever search engine you choose, the actual entry of the search topic will be the same. Just type in what you are looking for and press "Go" or "Search". The search engine will return all matched website pages which you can then open in individual windows and look through them at your leisure. My search for "Public Speaking" took me through several good sites and finally I arrived upon one from the University of Pennsylvania, which offers an Internet course for Public Speaking 101. The full course outline, material and lots of good ideas can be found there. Another site, "The Douglas Library" has scores of the world's most famous speeches which can be accessed, copied and used as examples.

My day had been saved! Only a few hours on the web and I then had enough resources, material and ideas to start the course. And all that from my home in Songkla by using just a PC, modem and a little help from my Internet Search Friends! Most of the websites in the world are in English language, however there are already thousands of Thai language sites and there are hundreds more opening every day. Just keep your eyes open and enjoy your drive along the "information highway" and remember there is no such thing as a speed limit there.

สารแห่งมนุษย์

เป็นมนุษย์อย่าเห็นว่าเป็นง่าย

มีกฎเกณฑ์มากมายจึงเกิดผล

ใช่คอหยักสักเห็นว่าเป็นคน

แต่สำนึกในตนสร้างคนเอง

ต้องรู้คิดรู้จำรู้กำหนด

รู้จักเก็บจักจดสร้างกฎเก่ง

รู้ดีชั่ว บาปกรรม รู้ยำเกรง

ไม่ข่มเหงผู้น้อยด้อยกว่าตัว

มนุษย์มีวัฒนธรรมที่ล้ำค่า

ถ่ายทอดต่อกันมาใช่เมามั่ว

รู้สร้างองค์ความรู้สู่กลุ่มตัว

เผยแพร่กันถ้วนทั่วสู่สังคม

มนุษย์จึงมีดีที่ศึกษา

ถ่ายทอดภูมิปัญญาอย่างเหมาะสม

ประเพณี จารีต ค่านิยม

มีปรัชญาเหมาะสมในกลุ่มตน

มนุษย์มีภาษาไว้สื่อสาร

ติดต่องานไม่ให้ใช้สับสน

วรรณศิลป์มีไว้ให้ชุมชน

ก่อเกิดผลให้มนุษย์พัฒนา

วารสารมนุษยศาสตร์สังคมศาสตร์

ช่วยประกาศว่ามนุษย์ได้ศึกษา

สืบทอดจากบรรพชนแต่ต้นมา

พัฒนาองค์ความรู้คู่สังคม

วารสารการศึกษาของมนุษย์

ช่วยชี้จุดด้อยดีที่เหมาะสม

ด้อยก็ติงหากมีดีก็ชม

สร้างสังคมวารสารด้วยงานเอย

ผศ.เตือน พรหมเมศ