I've been writing these columns for several years now and I hope they have helped classroom teachers, department heads, college-level methods instructors, and students utilize the immense resources of the internet in their work. I've noted a large increase in the number of websites that are relevant to social studies; and I've also observed a dramatic enhancement of the complexity and features of websites. Teachers at all grade levels have learned web design skills. This issue's column takes a look at websites designed by teachers and supervisors—either individually or in concert with colleagues—that are models of how to use the World Wide Web to help students with resources, activities, and other information related to a specific class. In some cases, a school's social studies department may have one website for all courses at that school or school district. Some teacher websites that I reviewed were limited to almost nothing but links to other websites. There was little about the courses the teacher is teaching, classroom and grading policies, or student assignments. I wanted to get a sense of what and how teachers approach social studies content and what instructional techniques they use. Here are some websites that meet those criteria and might give you or others in your school some good ideas about creating or improving your own websites.

Ms. LeBeau's HomePage
www.suelebeau.com
Sue LeBeau is currently the Technology/Distance Learning Advisor for the Long Branch, New Jersey, school district. She has thirty years of teaching experience with grades one through eight and her web design skills are remarkable. “Ms. LeBeau’s Home Page” doesn’t just serve the Long Branch teachers; there are sites specifically for students, parents, and even the school administrators. The home page is a model of clarity and simplicity, but the information and links provided under topics such as “All About Writing,” “Social Studies Links,” and “Cool Links for Kids” are comprehensive, accurate, up-to-date and quite useful.

Mr. Dowling's Electronic Passport
www.mrdowling.com
Here's a classroom teacher (Mike Dowling teaches geography at Roosevelt Middle School in West Palm Beach, Florida) who has taken his website into the “dot-com” category, meaning he has moved his site from his school district's network to another internet service provider that allows ads, which can generate some income. There are literally hundreds of resources to teach just about every topic in history, geography, and cultural studies. On many pages there are some discreet advertisements for books, films, and other teaching resources. These are not obtrusive and you don’t have to view the actual advertisement. All of the study guides, lesson plans, homework assignments, and tests are available for free download and you can modify any of the material to fit the needs of your students. All Mr. Dowling asks is for you to let him know how you modified and used his material. If he includes your variation on his site, he’ll give you credit for it. The units are comprehensive and complete. For example, his “Western Religions” unit includes a pretest, a study guide, homework assignments, and a final quiz. I don’t know if he makes any money from his website, but he’s put in a lot of work setting it up.

Mr. D's Website
www.mrdeeteacher.com
Ken Detweiler has been teaching in Jefferson County, Colorado, since 1978. While you can reach his site through Oberon Middle School’s website, you can also go directly to his dot-com site. Since he teaches U.S. history, his site is not as comprehensive as those that cover many social studies topics. This gives classroom teachers of only one or two subjects an idea on how a single-subject site might be set up. “Mr. D.” includes his class policies, hints for taking notes in class, instructions for varied writing assignments, and both individual and group assignments related to historical topics. For example, his “Family Field Trip to Fort Laramie” assignment includes short answer, essay, and map questions about the fort and very specific standards for achieving an “A,” “B,” or “C” grade on them. The pictures of student activities that he has arranged in the past illustrate Mr. D.’s creativity and enthusiasm for teaching.
Mr. Dziubek's Virtual Classroom

Mr. Dziubek is a U.S. government and Advanced Placement U.S. and comparative government teacher at St. John's Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio. If you want to read some strict student behavior and study policies, check out his syllabus for either the regular or AP courses. His AP students have to give a 10- to 12-minute presentation on major policy issues in 2004 and they must be “augmented by PowerPoint.” His assignments are tough and he requires all students to keep up-to-date on current events by specifying news programs and television specials they must watch.

Ms. Raff's History Classroom

Deborah Raff teaches both world and U.S. history at La Quinta Middle School in Desert Sands, California. She's clearly a creative and tireless teacher who provides both intellectually stimulating and some weird fun links on her resources web pages for students. She makes use of other websites for some of her instructional design, assignments, and testing. For example, she has a “Map Room” that utilizes the extensive map library at the University of Texas and several interactive map quizzes that are on a site titled “lizardpoint.com.” She also provides links to primary documents on U.S. and world history topics. One interesting aspect of her website is the direct linking of her course activities with the California History/Social Science Content Standards.

Mr. Diaz's Home Page

J. Carlos Diaz teaches social studies at Miami Senior High School in Florida. He says that the purpose of his home page is to “help [his] students to find sources of information for their projects, research papers, and other assignments.” The website is completely bilingual, designed to help limited English proficient students of Hispanic heritage. Like other teacher websites described in this column, much of the site's content consists of links to other outstanding websites containing social studies/social science information (including the NCSS website). Mr. Diaz also includes syllabi for all of his courses, his grading policy, student projects, and study guides for topics in both government and economics.

Mr. Stultz's School Site

If you ever want to feel humbled by how much you achieve compared to someone else, check out Dave Stutz’s School Site. As best as I can figure out, Dave, along with his wife, Susan, are currently teaching at the International School of Belgrade in the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro. Dave has also taught at a high school in Rochester, Minnesota, at Indian Trail Academy in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in Pakistan at the Lahore International School, at two international schools in Honduras, and in South Korea. He has

Mr. Donn's Ancient History Page

This site has been an award-winning web page for several years. I mentioned it in a column on “Teaching History with the Internet” some time ago. Both Don Donn and his wife, Lin, have put together a fantastic set of links to other sites, many—but not all—on topics related to ancient and world history. There are original lesson plans on topics such as Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are also interesting role-playing lessons such as “Can You Save the Roman Republic?” and a four-day mini unit on the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. I have always appreciated this colorful website for its easy-to-use layout that is easy to search and use. The links are always up-to-date and topics such as children’s literature and the environment make it much more than just an ancient history website.

The websites described above represent only a small sample of teacher-designed social studies websites. I tried to select those that used somewhat different approaches to site design. Some are fully integrated into the course structure of a specific teacher. Others are more general and can be used by many teachers and students from around the country. If you have a website—or know of a colleague’s—that would be useful for other social studies educators, write me at singer@indiana.edu and let me know about it.

C. Frederick Risinger recently retired as director of professional development coordinator of social studies education at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is currently working on two social studies writing projects, is developing a new website, and works two shifts a week as a bartender at a local microbrewery.