

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Humanities
Department of English and American Studies

The Internet as a Development Tool for English Teachers

Thesis

Author: Hana Jelínková
Supervisor: PhDr. Šárka Ježková, Ph.D.

2005

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta humanitních studií
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Internet jako prostředek rozvoje učitele anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

Autor: Hana Jelínková
Vedoucí: PhDr. Šárka Ježková, Ph.D.

2005

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

pro: Hanu Jelínkovou

obor: Učitelství anglického jazyka

Název tématu: Internet jako prostředek rozvoje učitele anglického jazyka

Zásady pro vypracování:

Studentka se bude ve své práci zabývat aktuální situací v oblasti zapojování informačních a komunikačních technologií do práce učitelů a jejich vlivem na jejich další rozvoj. Pozornost bude soustředována především na práci s internetovými stránkami určenými pro učitele angličtiny. Budou vymezena kritéria hodnocení těchto stránek, především v souvislosti s další prací učitelů anglického jazyka.

Výzkumná část bude zaměřena na práci učitelů s konkrétními webovými stránkami. Autorka bude na vybraném vzorku učitelů anglického jazyka pozorovat preference učitelů, jejich požadavky na kvalitní webové stránky, konkrétní práci s těmito stránkami a souvislost této práce s celkovým profesním rozvojem učitelů.

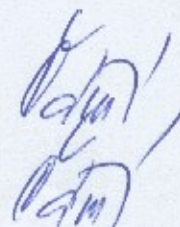
Vedoucí diplomové práce: Mgr. Šárka Čáňová, Ph.D.

Podpis:

Vedoucí katedry: Mgr. Šárka Čáňová, Ph.D.

Podpis:

Datum zadání práce: 30. 4. 2003




Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracoval/a samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil/a, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byl/a jsem seznámen/a s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 28. 2. 2005



Hana Jelínková

Ráda bych zde poděkovala především mé vedoucí diplomové práce PhDr. Šárce Ježkové, Ph.D. nejen za čas, který ochotně věnovala konzultacím, ale i za zájem a trpělivý komentář, se kterým přistupovala k mé práci. Dále bych ráda poděkovala PaedDr. Monice Černé, Ph.D. za vřelou pomoc při výběru tématu diplomové práce a Mgr. Pavlu Breberovi za ochotné poskytnutí velmi užitečných rad týkajících se výzkumných metod. Vřelé díky patří rovněž všem ředitelům základních škol, kteří mi umožnili distribuci dotazníků, a všem učitelům a kolegům, kteří se ochotně samotného výzkumu zúčastnili a poskytli mi tak velké množství informací. Bez jejich pomoci by tato diplomová práce nikdy nemohla vzniknout. Největší poděkování patří mé rodině, zejména mým rodičům, za veškerou podporu, kterou mi ochotně poskytovali nejen v průběhu mého studia na této škole, ale i při vzniku celé této práce, bez které bych nikdy nebyla schopna studium dokončit.

Abstrakt

Již vstup do dvacátého prvního století předznamenal, že lidstvo bude vystaveno mnoha změnám ve všedním životě, jež budou způsobeny velmi rychlým technickým rozvojem, před nímž budou muset obstát nejen představitelé všech generací, ale také všech profesí. Především na učitele, a to nejen na učitele cizích jazyků, bude kladen nelehký úkol připravit budoucí generace tak, aby obstály ve všedním i pracovním životě.

Již po mnoho let je více či méně úspěšně kladen důraz na stálý profesní rozvoj učitelů mající za cíl kvalitní a efektivní výuku. Tato diplomová práce představuje Internet, jež se stává jedním z nejužívanějších medií v novém tisíciletí, jako možný prostředek celoživotního rozvoje učitelů anglického jazyka.

Je však nutné poznamenat, že je zde mnoho problémů, kterým učitelé často jen s obtížemi čelí. Patří mezi ně například nevyhovující či nedostatečné technické vybavení škol. V jiných případech se stává, že ač je vybavení poměrně kvalitní, pedagogové k němu mají pouze velmi omezený přístup. Dále pak sami učitelé často neumějí nebo nechtějí počítače a tím Internet vůbec využívat. Důvody se v mnohých případech opakují; učitelé si stěžují na nedostatek informací o tom, co jim jako pedagogům Internet nabízí, jak případné zdroje najít a jak si z onoho velkého množství vybrat. Diplomová práce se právě těmito problémy zabývá. Nabízí přehled potenciálně vhodných prostředků a zdrojů dostupných na Internetu, představuje možné způsoby vyhledávání těchto zdrojů a navrhuje možná kritéria jejich hodnocení. Jinými slovy představuje a shrnuje dovednosti, bez jejichž nabytí by bylo jen obtížně možné efektivně využít vše, co může pedagogům pomoci pracovat na jejich profesním rozvoji.

Abstract

Nowadays modern life is full of changes and technical development more than it has ever been in the past. For this reason, the teaching profession is responsible for keeping up with those changes to prepare children to be able to stand the test of modern adult life once they leave schools. In order to be able to do so, teachers are also required to face rapid changes in technology and correspond these developments in their profession.

The Internet and World Wide Web are presented in this thesis as invaluable tools serving teachers' in their professional development, as these media enable them to use innumerable resources and tools not just those specifically created for language teachers.

However, there are several obstacles on the way to accomplishing the ultimate state when all language teachers would be contentedly using resources and tools provided by these incredible media. Firstly, there are numerous problems at schools often making it impossible for many teachers to use the Internet and World Wide Web. Secondly, it is uncommon that teachers themselves are often unwilling to investigate the values of these media, or even learn how to use them. Thirdly, although there are teachers who are willing to use the media, they are struggling with the technology, they do not know what is available, they do not know how to find what they desire, and last but not least, they do not know how to approach the constantly growing glut of data accessible. This thesis suggests ways in which those willing teachers who want to use the Internet as a development tool can face these obstacles in order to reach what they desire.

Contents

Introduction	1
1. A brief history of the Internet and World Wide Web	4
1.1. History of the Internet and World Wide Web in general	4
1.2. History of the use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching	5
1.3. Advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching	10
1.3.1. Advantages	10
1.3.2. Disadvantages	11
1.4. Summary	12
2. Potential use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching	14
2.1. The Internet in teacher development	14
2.1.1. Internet communication tools	15
2.2. The World Wide Web in teacher development	16
2.2.1. Professional Journals and Magazines	17
2.2.2. On-line Libraries	17
2.2.3. On-line Media	18
2.2.4. Professional Organizations and Associations	19
2.2.5. On-line Workshops and Conferences	19
2.2.6. English Language Programs and Teacher Sites	20
2.2.7. Publishers and their web sites	20
2.2.8. Language Reference Material	21
2.2.9. Downloadable Software Tools	21
2.2.10. Sites for English Language Learning	22
2.3. Development of the World Wide Web	23
2.4. Copyright	23
2.5. Summary	23
3. Web-search tools and techniques	25
3.1. Web-search tools	25
3.1.1. Gateways sites	26
3.1.2. Web rings	27
3.1.3. Subject directories	27
3.1.4. Search engines	28
3.1.5. Real language search sites	29
3.2. Additional tips for effective searching	29
3.3. Summary	30
4. Critically evaluating web sites: strategies for English teachers	32
4.1. Strategies: where to start	32
4.1.1. The Web address and its component parts	33
4.1.2. Domains	34
4.2. Criteria for evaluating web sites	35
4.2.1. Purpose/Aim	37
4.2.2. Authority	38
4.2.3. Content/Depth	39
4.2.4. Accuracy	40
4.2.5. Currency	41
4.2.6. Design	42
4.3. Summary	43

5. Search techniques and evaluating criteria in practice	45
5.1. Testing process	45
5.1.1. Feedback 1	46
5.1.2. Feedback 2	51
5.1.3. Feedback 3	54
5.1.4. Feedback 4	56
5.1.5. Feedback 5	58
5.2. Summary	59
Conclusion	61
Resumé	64
References	69
Appendix	74
A. Questionnaires	75
B. Outcomes of the 2004 research	79
C. Údaje pro knihovnickou databázi	88

Introduction

Since its creation the Internet has been considered a promising tool. The number of users has increased from just a few organisations, associations, universities, scientists and well-situated citizens of developed countries to a vast medium that is widely accessible almost all around the world. Meanwhile, “the nature of the Internet has changed as a result of the introduction of more sophisticated means of finding information and publishing on the World Wide Web” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, vii).

At the same time, as a reaction to these changes in the modern world and so maintain the ability to reflect people’s needs, the English teaching profession has continued to grow and adapt “with more emphasis placed than ever before on the development of skills for meaningful communication, critical literacy, autonomous lifelong learning” and constant professional development (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, vii). To experience new methods, approaches, techniques and materials, English teachers participate in local or international conferences and workshops, subscribe to professional journals and magazines, and co-operate with authorities or their own colleagues. Nevertheless, all these activities are often very expensive and time consuming. In contrast to this, the Internet is a valuable alternative that saves money, time and energy as well as enables English teachers to communicate with colleagues from all around the world whenever they desire. At almost no cost they can participate in on-line conferences, read on-line professional journals, or even print out ready-made handouts with detailed plans and tips for their lessons.

However, in order to get the most out of the Internet, an effort must be made to assist teachers master certain skills and approach this technology in an effective way. According to Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt (2000, 19), the core skills (nowadays considered to be new key informational literacies) are the use of Internet communication tools as thanks to them the world is getting smaller, an ability to search for web sites and information and materials presented on them. Additionally, sorting and storing results of a particular search and critical evaluation of everything found on the Web is also important because the World Wide Web, being such “a massive repository of information” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 49), could be overwhelming or even misleading if not critically evaluated. To

show practical use of these strategies, numerous examples are provided of their real application and use. To reflect their practicality and effect on the teaching profession, five language teachers were asked to comment on them. Although these literacies should not be ignored by teachers of all foreign languages they should be of special importance to those who teach or speak English because “some 85% of the World’s electronic information is said to be in the English language” (Crystal 1997, as quoted in Warschauer, Shetzer, and Meloni 2000, 49).

In order to monitor the current application of the Internet in the teaching profession and its use for professional development in the Czech Republic, research was undertaken in late spring and early summer 2004. The primary aim of this research was to explore the ways in which teachers work with the Internet and based on this, develop a set of criteria to assist these users meet their requirements. For the purpose of this research a questionnaire was created in both English and Czech versions (Appendix A) to cover as many schools and their English teachers (those willing to co-operate) and so gain as much data on the topic as possible. To prevent possible problems during the research, both versions of the questionnaires were carefully created to have all necessary requisites (including clear layout, clear explanation of the purpose, expression of thanks to respondents, assurance of confidentiality, explicit instructions, unambiguous questions in proper order about relevant issues, and no spelling and typographical errors). The questionnaires were also consulted and piloted (Denscombe 2003, 162). Many thanks again to all the principals who allowed personal distribution of these questionnaires in their schools and also to all the willing teachers who devoted their time to answering the survey questions. It would not have been possible to complete the practical part of this thesis without their co-operation.

There were 86 participants from cities and towns across the Czech Republic including Dvůr Králové, Hradec Králové, Chrudim, Litomyšl, Náchod, Ohrazenice, Ostrava, Pardubice, Praha, Slušovice and Všestary. Of the 86 participants 66 teach English at primary school, 19 at language school and one participant teaches at junior high school¹. 71 participants are female teachers, and 12 of the 86 respondents are native speakers, who currently teach

¹ Translation of “víceleté gymnázium”

English in the Czech Republic. All of their answers were carefully counted and analysed for the purpose of this thesis. Many sincere thanks again.

1. A brief history of the Internet and World Wide Web

The Internet has become an important part of man's everyday lifestyle. Millions of people all over the world benefit from the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Trotman (2000) specifies the number of people using the Internet: "There are currently thought to be around 35 million computers connected to the Internet although this is increasing daily." As Trotman suggests the number of users connected to the Internet grows everyday, there is no doubt that it is much higher now in 2004 and will be even higher in the future. This situation reflects how society is changing and developing with this technology and will continue to do so in the 21st century.

1.1. History of the Internet and World Wide Web in general

The Internet's potential is incontestable, with many books having been written on the subject and its impact on people's everyday life and work. In his book, *A brief history of the future: the origins of the Internet* (1999, 21 - 22), John Naughton compares the Internet to other remarkable inventions mankind has made including the railways and the automobile. He also stresses the value of print, telegraph and television as these, in the same way as the Internet, markedly transformed the means of communication in everyday human life.

Although no invention can change the fact that time mercilessly takes minutes of men's lives, most of the inventions mentioned above were invaluable in providing mankind with a comfortable lifestyle. Trotman (2000) briefly summarises the inspiration in 1969 behind what was later called 'The Internet' and nowadays enables almost anyone to reach practically any person within a few moments. Due to the threat of nuclear attacks during the Cold War, the American 'Darpanet' (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency) was forced to create a new means of communication. Regardless of their location all computers were connected to "standard telephone lines", enabling users to communicate throughout them in the event of a nuclear attack on one of the sites. For this reason, this new invention was kept secret for a long time. During the 1970's, thanks to the Internet's great potential,

this means of communication was used by scientists and researchers in higher education, and soon became widely accessible.

Despite the success of the Internet, there were other projects which were to make the Internet even more effective. Nearly 20 years later, the idea of sharing documents throughout the Internet resulted in what people nowadays most associate with the Internet, the World Wide Web. Sperling (1998, 5 - 6) briefly describes what started as an experimental project in 1989 in Switzerland at CERN (The European Laboratory of Practical Physics). Thousands of documents were linked together by the use of 'hyper-text', with the system being perfected in 1993. Hyper-text was and is still used to link documents, making navigation of the Internet easier. This is where the term "Web" comes from and is used to describe documents linked in this way. This has become the most widely used aspect of the Internet to date.

With the click of a mouse it is now possible to jump around the world. "With a single computer and a telephone line a young child in a rural village can access more information today than was available by any means to the greatest scientists of the world a century ago" (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 1). Since 1997 the number of web sites in English has grown from one million to 320 million and with this number rising daily, these estimates are now multiple times higher (Duggleby 2000, 19).

1.2. History of the use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching

Widely considered inseparable from everyday life, computers along with the use of the Internet and World Wide Web have promised great potential to the English language classroom and "...many educational institutions and ELT publications are investigating the value of the Internet to language learning" (Trotman 2000).

However, the history and actual use of IT and the Internet in language classrooms is relatively brief and can be divided into three epochs. During the first epoch, slow computers, bad quality diskettes, copiable grammar activities and text-reconstruction programs were typical and often used when Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) started to be popular in the early 1980's in developed countries. Pictures and

images (both still and moving), interactivity and sound were already accessible on ‘read only’ Compact discs (CD ROM’s) during the second epoch in the late 1980’s. The only disadvantage of these promising aids was that by being more powerful even more expensive technology was required. Although everything from the first two epochs is still widely available and often used, the current epoch is dominated by the Internet, especially the World Wide Web (Trotman 2000; Warschauer and Healey 1998).

The current epoch started in developed Western countries in the early 1990’s. In contrast, it arrived in East European countries after long delays due to different political and economic conditions. In comparison to the United States or Great Britain, there are still many countries that are struggling with the application of the Internet in ELT for many reasons. Although “many developing countries ... view the Internet as a potential tool for leapfrogging to higher stages of information access and economic development” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 2) they have to face many problems. For example, the current situation of the use of the Internet in Russia and Ukraine is briefly described in TESL-EJ magazine (2001, 3):

Colleagues in Russia and Ukraine, for example, are using the professional resources and contacts. Because of lack of familiarity with pedagogical uses of the Internet, as well as cost and technical unreliability, The Internet is usually not used in English classrooms. It is expected, however, that the Internet will become integrated into language classrooms over the next several years.

Wayne Trotman (2000) agrees with this point as he admits: “...aspects of the Internet and in particular World Wide Web [are] widely available, but currently little understood or used in schools.” He adds (2000): “... it would be idealistic and naïve to believe that ELT could take advantage of the Internet in all the corners of the globe at present.” Research shows that the current situation of the use or accessibility of the Internet is different all around the world. It is not surprising that the United States is dominant in this field and thanks to the statistics the total numbers can be misleading. In fact, apart from the United States, Europe and Japan, less than 5% of countries with English Language Teaching (ELT) including China, Brazil and Egypt, have comparable conditions or access to the Internet (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000).

The Czech Republic is no exception in this field as the introduction of the Internet in ELT was not without problems and delays. The current situation of the application and actual use of the Internet in ELT in the Czech Republic was influenced in its beginning by the country's historical circumstances. During the 1980's, in East European countries (including the Czech Republic) communist regimes negatively affected the accessibility of both information technology and software that could have potentially been used in ELT at those times. In addition, the target language in language classrooms was Russian and not English. Although that would not have been a barrier to the use of modern technologies in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages, it is important to highlight that these technologies were not available during that era. For this reason, the use of the Internet in all Czech schools has been slowed down, resulting in some English teachers feeling wary of the Internet as a new technology. Even primary school students who have more experience with the use of the Internet and World Wide Web than their teachers are not rare exceptions. This is very frustrating for both students and their teachers and does not help the situation in ELT at all. The 2004 research reflects teachers' opinions about the use of the Internet in their profession (Appendix B, Table 2), what some teachers use the Internet for (Appendix B, Table 4), the reasons some teachers cannot use it (Appendix B, Table 5), and why some of them refuse to use the Internet at all (Appendix B, Table 6).

It is not such a long time ago when all teachers had to deal with the introduction of personal computers in schools. Khurshid Ahmed (1985, 1) describes the situation as it was in the late 1980's: "Where the young generations were excited about something new and revolutionary, the older generations seemed to be much less affected unless they had strong motivation." He describes the beginning of the application of personal computers in education in the Introduction of his book *Computers, Language Learning and Language Teaching*:

In societies, which have already undergone great changes as a result of contact with computers, educational authorities continue to hesitate. The delay in utilising the computer in teaching is not surprising when we consider the speed at which computer technology is evolved. Yet the computer is not so forbidding, and there is no doubt that it can make a useful contribution to teaching a wide spread of subjects, including languages, applying a very broad range of methodologies.

Nonetheless, many teachers continue to show reluctance to approach the new technology, and this gives cause for concern.

David Hardisty and Scott Wendeatt (1989, 3) agree with him even four years later as he highlighted in the book *CALL*. “Unfortunately, the idea of using computers strikes fear and dread into the hearts of the uninitiated”. As with *CALL* 20 years ago, ELT authorities agree that the Internet and World Wide Web “can make a useful contribution to teaching” although they point out that still “many teachers continue to show reluctance to approach the new technology” (Ahmed 1985, 1). History can indeed be seen to repeat itself, with close parallels between the introduction of personal computers in the 1980s and the Internet and World Wide Web nowadays.

Realistically, there are also other factors that schools and even highly motivated teachers (as not all of them have a reluctant attitude) have to face. Despite being in the 21st century, the Internet is still not satisfactorily accessible to everyone throughout the Czech Republic. However, when speaking about educational institutions, most of them have access to the Internet. Even so, not all teachers have the luxury of access to a computer laboratory everyday, if at all, because there are not a sufficient number of computers for the whole school and its students. What is more, principals of Czech schools often claim that the technology is too expensive.

Interestingly and in addition to this, many people (including English teachers) are not familiar with the use of the Internet. Part of the problem is in the way the Internet is presented to English teachers (Ahmed 1985). There are only a few books specifically about the use of the Internet in ELT that have been translated into Czech or written by Czech authors. They are mostly very basic and therefore of limited use after the first few weeks or for an intermediate user. An example of which is the publication by Jiří Zounek and Rostislav Kříž (2001) *Internet for Teachers*, with a very promising sub-title *How to Search and Find*. However, this book only offers a few basic points about searching methods, with very few links to various institutions or useful web sites. The section devoted to English teachers covers only five pages and what is more, it does not inform teachers about useful

links to free resources, which belong amongst the most wanted aspects of the World Wide Web in ELT nowadays, etc.

In contrast, there are numerous very well written and helpful books in English. One of the problems is that although aimed at teachers of English language, some teachers refuse to read in English, especially when they are learning to use some aspects of the Internet. What is more, most of the books are not widely accessible in public libraries and since most are high-priced, principals of Czech schools cannot afford to buy them.

One solution could be to recommend that teachers attend often reasonably priced courses or conferences with practical guided seminars organised by numerous educational institutions or schools themselves. Unfortunately, as the 2004 research shows, only a minor percentage of the research participants attended either long or short-term courses devoted to the use of the Internet. Ten respondents attended long term courses (20 – 50 hours) concentrating on general use of the Internet. Four respondents attended long-term courses with the focus on the use of the Internet in ELT. 27 respondents attended short-term courses (1 – 10 hours) about general Internet use and 19 of them attended short-term courses about the use of the Internet in ELT. All of them claim that if they had a chance to attend such a course, they would sign up for it (Appendix B, Table 3). In cases where there are no books, conferences or money available, the only option left for those teachers who still want to explore and develop their skills is to do so independently. However, this can be very time consuming and often causes most teachers to give up their efforts. This results in very few teachers who are able to use the Internet effectively if at all, with many teachers not even aware of its great potential. An effort to motivate teachers should be made because if motivating works with pupils why should it not work with teachers themselves. If they were aware of the Internet's potential, they would see a reason for its use and be motivated to know more so as to get the most out of it for their profession.

1.3. Advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching

The Internet's potential has already been mentioned many times. Generally speaking, the Internet and the World Wide Web are believed to be highly motivating and valuable for both students and teachers in terms of what they can offer both groups.

1.3.1. Advantages

According to Warschauer and his colleagues, one of the biggest values of the use of the Internet in ELT is that it “brings English teaching ALIVE” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 7 - 8). They go on to explain the term. “A” stands for “Authenticity”, which is a key component of English learning. All people learn most effectively and successfully when the learning takes place in an authentic context. A major advantage of the Internet is that users have 24hour access to authentic material of any kind for a low price.

“L” stands for “Literacy”. At the beginning of the 21st century, it is not enough to be able to only read, write and count. Through the involvement of the Internet in an English lesson, students learn skills that will be required later in their professions, such as research, publishing and communication via the Internet.

“I” stands for “Interaction” which is another key component of effective language learning. The Internet provides an opportunity to communicate with native speakers from all around the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. One of the advantages of training students to communicate via the Internet is that those students who are normally very shy to talk in the classroom will benefit from it because they become more active than they would normally be during their English lessons, ultimately leading to improved self-confidence.

“V” stands for “Vitality” as the Internet can help students learn English for obvious reasons such as communication and so connect English with their personal needs.

“E” stands for “Empowerment” as the Internet can help improve teachers' and students' knowledge at any time and period of their life.

In addition to the use of the Internet making language learning exciting and effective, it also improves problem-solving and benefits collaborative learning (Felix 1998, 16; Donaghy 2003; Karayan and Crowe 1997; Kastenbaum 1999; Kubala 1998).

Kim Gray, a director of IELTS Language School in Texas summarises advantages she values about the use of the Internet in her lessons (as quoted in Sperling 1998, 51):

Because the possibilities are endless, I am always able to improve my ability to teach by offering students activities that can take them almost anywhere in the world right from the school in Austin.

It is important to highlight that the success of an effective lesson is not created by the medium itself. It depends on the way the Internet is used and whether all activities are planned and used in an appropriate way. The Internet should not be used as “a quick fix of all problems students have to face. [Teachers should] be prepared for a lot of hard work and frustration that come from trying to use a new and evolving medium. But [they should] also be prepared for the rewards...” that come afterwards (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 8). Despite disadvantages, frustration and hard work that undeniably comes hand in hand with the use of the Internet (as the 2004 research shows), teachers are aware of the advantages that the Internet offers their profession. They believe it can be a very effective tool and is helpful in ELT along with being a great motivation for students (Appendix B, Table 2).

1.3.2. Disadvantages

As every coin has two sides, despite the numerous advantages outlined above the drawbacks of the Internet’s use in ELT cannot be ignored. Ushi Felix (1998, 15 - 18) mentions some of them in his book *Virtual language learning*. Firstly, users of the Internet cannot get proficient overnight and this is one of the biggest problems. There are many people, and it seems to be a higher percentage amongst teachers rather than students, who are afraid of using modern technologies, as they do not know how to use them. As the 2004 research shows, of the 86 participants, seven stated that they would use the Internet if they could attend a course (Appendix B, Table 5). Secondly, navigation of the World Wide Web is not always helpful and for this reason it is easy to get lost in cyberspace. Thirdly, large

graphics, sound and video take a long time to load, potentially leading to very slow response rates, which are also dependent on access speed. There are three basic types of connection to the Internet. Slow (modem connections through regular telephone lines), medium (ISDN lines through digital lines) and fast speed access (permanent connection), with the later being the most ideal for a language classroom (Teeler and Gray 2000, 58). Thirdly, “the Web is [also] a key source of viruses, or stumbling accidentally across web sites containing offensive materials can be bad” (Felix 2003, 200). Last but not least, facilities in Czech schools are not always up-to-date or corresponding with the fast development in information technology. Of the 86 participants of the 2004 research, 11 complained about the quality of IT equipment in their schools, which results in them not being able to use the Internet the way they would like (Appendix B, Table 5). Restricted access to computer laboratories caused by “the costs or the logistics of scheduling” has already been mentioned (Teeler and Gray 2000, 36). Although this may seem to be a frequent problem, only one participant of the 2004 research complained about it (Appendix B, Table 5).

Along with technological problems, teachers’ lack of time is often mentioned when they explain the reasons why the Internet is not used in their lessons. There were surprising outcomes from the 2004 research, with 25 participants stating that they do not have time to use the Internet (Appendix B, Table 5). It would be speculation to say why some teachers find the use of the Internet time consuming. Some of the most frequent reasons have already been mentioned, for example a lack of IT knowledge and ways in which to approach what the Internet has to offer English teachers. Often teachers do not know how to find what they need from the World Wide Web and tend to feel overloaded and frustrated by the glut of information that comes from an average Web search.

1.4. Summary

It would be extremely difficult to solve all the problems that teachers and students have to face when considering the use of the Internet in ELT, particularly if the problem is school budgeting and inappropriate IT facilities. On the other hand, numerous advantages have

been stated in this chapter that support the fact that the Internet can be an effective tool that should be considered for the use in ELT. However, there is also another possible use of the Internet apart from its use to motivate learners. This thesis presents the Internet as a valuable tool for teachers' professional development. The following chapters provide teachers with tips to help them overcome some of the obstacles stated in this chapter in approaching the Internet and World Wide Web. Some teachers openly stated that they are not aware of the potential of the Internet (Appendix B, Table 5), and so chapter two describes what is currently available and valuable to this profession.

2. Potential use of the Internet and World Wide Web in English language teaching

Although the World Wide Web is only one of many aspects of the Internet, many users and authorities when talking about the World Wide Web (or simply the Web), often refer to it as the Internet (or Net). Since the World Wide Web has established itself as the single most popular feature of the Internet (Sperling 1998, 5) many people use these terms interchangeably. IT professionals may not be happy about it but according to Wallace (1999, 12) it should not be such a big problem. She explains:

Purists might argue that the term *net* is actually broader than just *Internet* because it includes proprietary services (like America Online's member areas) that may not be accessible to all Internet users. But then, not all the services on the Internet are accessible to all Internet users either, so I see no reason to exclude research that explores behaviour in these proprietary online services.

So as not to cause any confusion, for the purpose of this thesis the term Internet is used as a broader term, while the World Wide Web (or Web) is used when referring to one aspect of the Internet. The term Net is not used in this thesis.

Despite the drawbacks that the use of the Internet and World Wide Web can have in ELT, it is generally believed (as shown in the previous chapter) that this medium is a beneficial tool for ELT (Eastment 1996, *The Internet for Teachers and Learners*; Warschauer and Whittaker 1997). This chapter explores aspects of the Internet and the World Wide Web that can be used in teacher development.

2.1. The Internet in teacher development

One of the advantages mentioned in chapter one was that the Internet provides both teachers and students with many opportunities to communicate with anyone in the world at anytime of the day. For example, students can actively practise their English, while Internet communication tools enable teachers to consult professional issues, share ideas, discuss relevant teaching practices, and so gradually develop in their profession.

2.1.1. Internet communication tools

There are many ways in which the Internet can be used to communicate. One option is to communicate “asynchronously”, which means that the process of communication does not happen in real time. Teachers can use e-mail, mailing lists, USENET newsgroups, Web Discussion Boards (also called Bulletin Boards), or conferencing. Another option is “synchronous” or real time communication, such as Live Chat, MUDs (Multi-user Domains), MOOs (Multi-user Domains, Object-Oriented), or Audio and Videoconferencing (Chou, Syed and Warschauer 1996; Duggleby 2000; Eastment 1996, *The Internet and ELT*; Hackett 1996; Karayan and Crowe 1997; Sperling 1998; Tella 1992; Wallace 1999; Warschauer 1995). The 2004 research revealed that 72 of the 86 participants use e-mail as an on-line communication tool. Although some of the users did not specify the purpose of their e-mail use, the results show that 62 of them use e-mail solely for private correspondence, 37 participants send administrative e-mails and only 23 send e-mails relating to professional issues. Only five participants stated that they discuss their professional problems or share ideas with other teachers from different schools via the Internet (Appendix B, Table 4).

Just as people who make phone calls or write letters follow certain rules of etiquette so as not to cause offence, users of Internet communication tools should also follow similar rules. “Netiquette is a neologism that expresses that there is a right and wrong way to behave when communicating on the Internet” (Duggleby 2000, 48). Duggleby further lists general guidelines for such acceptable behaviour. She suggests that, for example, users should not forget about the fact that other people have feelings too, and that privacy, time and cultural differences should be respected. Provoking is not acceptable. Technically, proof-reading should not be ignored as misspelling makes writers look “sloppy or, worse yet, incompetent” (Crystal 2001, 112). In addition, the use of capital letters is considered inappropriate on the Internet.

Non-Web communication facilities enable teachers to contact other teachers, authorities, and friends from all over the world in a very short time whenever they need to and for a low cost. Therefore, these means of communication are highly recommended for use in

ELT. In addition to this valuable aspect of the Internet, the World Wide Web provides teachers with innumerable tools for their professional development.

2.2. The World Wide Web in teacher development

The World Wide Web is probably the most frequently used aspect of the Internet. The variety and quantity of World Wide Web resources for English teachers is indisputable. PhDr. Sabina Pazderová (2004, 1) from State Language School in Olomouc proves that when she says: “There’s so much material that it’s hard to squeeze all the information in a short article.” Titles like “the greatest public library in the world” (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*), “the ultimate resource bank for language teaching” (Dudeny 2000, 1), or even “a gold mine of resources” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 22) can also be heard or read when talking or reading about the World Wide Web. What is it then on the Web that could be of interest or practical use in ELT? Dave Sperling (1997, as quoted in Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*) provides an answer to this question in his book *The Internet for English Language Teachers*. He writes:

Imagine an infinite number of resources available for your students to improve their skills in reading, writing, grammar, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, slang, Test of English as a Foreign Language and even conversation. Or contemplate your class sharing their creativity with the entire world – essays, poems, recipes, biographies, or even artwork. Or perhaps communicating – with text, voice, and live video – with ESL/EFL classes from all parts of the world. ... Sounds wonderful, doesn’t it? It is!

What is more, this list is not exhaustive, as the number of web sites with an interest to English teachers grows daily. In addition to this, web sites are often divided into numerous groups according to the aim of which they have been created. Wayne Trotman (1998) refers to two general groups of web sites: “ELT ‘Dedicated’ Sites”, and “ELT ‘Non-Dedicated’ Sites”. In contrast, David Eastment (1998, *ELT: Where are...*) refers to five different groups of sites such as “Informational sites”, “Commercial ELT sites”, “Student activities”, “Teacher resources” and “Non-ELT sites.” No matter what the headings are, all authorities including Blackie (1995), Rong-chang Li and Roger Hart (1996), Serdyukov and Stvan (2001), Dave Sperling (1998), Dede Teeler and Peta Gray (2000), Mark Warschauer with

Heidi Shetzer and Christine Meloni (2000) agree on what is a potentially valuable resource for ELT or teacher development generally. The World Wide Web offers professional journals and magazines, virtual libraries, on-line media, professional organisation's and association's web sites, on-line workshops and conferences, English language programs and teacher web sites, publisher's web sites, language reference material, downloadable software tools, and sites for English language learning.

2.2.1. Professional Journals and Magazines

There are numerous journals that can be read only on-line, for example, *TESL-EJ* (<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/>), *The Internet TESL Journal* (<http://itesl.org/>), *Language Learning & Technology* (<http://llt.msu.edu/>), or *The Journal* (<http://www.thejournal.com>). There is also a number of journals and magazines that are published partly on-line. It means that only a few chosen articles or issues are available on the Web. An example of such a magazine is the *ESL Magazine* (<http://www.eslmag.com>). Lastly, there is a group of professional journals and magazines for English teachers, which although not published on-line, it is possible to check their tables of content or abstracts. Examples of these include the *ELT Journal* (<http://eltj.oupjournals.org/>), or TESOL Quarterly (http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp) (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 22). These magazines and journals supply teachers with resourceful articles full of news, ideas, tips and solutions applicable to their difficult profession. Despite there being very few professional magazines or journals in the Czech Republic (for example *Foreign Languages*, *Pedagogy*, *Teacher's Friend*, etc.) 21 of the research participants stated that they read professional journals on-line (Appendix B, Table 4).

2.2.2. On-line Libraries

Users of virtual libraries are allowed to read or order full text articles from magazines, journals, news wires, transcripts or other documents such as maps and pictures. Some virtual libraries allow users to look into databases of other libraries around the world. However, most libraries charge a fee as they consider this to be a commercial service.

Some of them charge per article or on a monthly basis (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 22 - 23). An example of which is the Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC, <http://www.genome.ou.edu/eric.html>) providing access to a wide variety of articles from innumerable disciplines. Some students of English language teaching have an opportunity to learn to use it during their studies as their university (for example Macquarie University, Sydney) pays for the connection to ERIC. Not only is it rewarding during their studies but it also helps them later in their profession as there are about “850 000 conference papers and research articles” (Sperling 1998, 18). In the same book, Sperling also positively assesses the following virtual libraries: *High Beam Library* (<http://www.highbeam.com/library/index.asp?>), and *Internet Public Library* (<http://www.ipl.org/>), which is the first on-line public library “of and for the Internet Community.”

2.2.3. On-line Media

Books cannot be excluded from the wealth of media resources available on the Web. For example, *Project Gutenberg* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>) offers free non-fiction, novels, poetry and plays (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 23). Other reading resources can be found on *Literature Online* (<http://lion.chadwyck.com>). Books can also be purchased easily through on-line booksellers. One of the most famous and often recommended is *Amazon.com* (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/home/home.html/102-8714045-9740900>).

Non-ELT magazines and newspapers belong to a group of authentic resources that are also popular for English teaching. English teachers can download up to date reading material for their students whenever they like as all major periodicals have their own web sites including *The Times* (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>), *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com>), or *The Sydney Morning Herald* (<http://www.smh.com.au>). There are also popular news web sites including for example, *CNN.com* (<http://www.cnn.com>), or *BBC Online* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk>), which even has a special and very popular section for children and schools (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/>).

The number of resources of non-ELT origin is vast as is their potential for use in ELT. This group reflects the ‘real world’ and includes for example, art. If *World Wide Arts Resources*

(<http://wwar.com>) does not seem sufficient there is no need to abandon all hope (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 23 - 24). Almost every art gallery or museum has its own web site full of useful information that can be used in English lessons. Film and music web sites or databases, such as *Internet Movie Database* (<http://www.imdb.com>), also provide a wealth of innumerable sources including, for example, biographical information, summaries of plots, or critical reviews. Other topics such as the environment, world cultures, advertisements, health, crime, hobbies, travelling, food, and photographs can also fill lessons with authenticity in the same way as various pictures, drawings, cartoons, RealAudio and RealVideo. Particularly in the past it was this group of non-ELT origin resources that made the World Wide Web valuable to ELT as there were only a few ELT web sites (Eastment 1996, *The Internet and ELT*). Even nowadays, resources of non-ELT origin are still very popular. 42 participants of the 2004 research download pictures, 38 respondents print authentic reading and eight download films and related information from the Web (Appendix B, Table 5).

2.2.4. Professional Organizations and Associations

Most international organisations and associations, for example, *TESOL*, or *IATEFL* have their own web sites; *TESOL* (http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp), *IATEFL*, the *International Association of Teachers of English* (<http://www.iatefl.org>). Not only are they very useful for their members, but also for other users interested in keeping in contact with these associations. Regular newsletters presented on their web sites, or at least some parts available to the public can help teachers stay informed and up to date (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 24). On the *TESOL* web site, there is also a job centre, a section devoted to professional development and a section full of resources for students of all ages.

2.2.5. On-line Workshops and Conferences

Some of the professional organisations or associations, for example, *TESOL* (http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp) hold or sponsor on-line workshops or conferences during which all participants have a chance to interact with other teachers from all over the world.

During any conference there is always guidance provided from the organisers. These conferences are held either in real time via chat room sessions, or the participants can communicate asynchronously with the use of e-mail lists or Web discussion boards (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 25 - 26). Through the use of the Internet it is also possible to study materials from conferences not held on-line. The University of Pardubice organises conferences for their students who are on their one-year teaching practise at primary schools around the whole Czech Republic. Most of the teacher trainees find the forum very helpful as they have a chance to share and discuss problems with their colleagues and tutors whenever they need to. These sessions are valuable because they present the benefits of on-line communication in real practice.

2.2.6. English Language Programs and Teacher Sites

Universities and their faculties have their own web sites where they advertise English language programs and also inform about special grants and scholarships. Mark Warschauer and his co-writers (2000, 26) recommend a comprehensive list of links to English language programs throughout the world that can be found in Sperling's *ESL Web Guide* under the heading 'Schools' (<http://www.eslcafe.com/search>). Distance learning courses and e-learning also open new possibilities for further education to English teachers in the 21st century.

2.2.7. Publishers and their web sites

Commercial sites created by publishers provide news about releases of all types of books (like readers, textbooks, reference books connected with ELT, etc.) What is more, if required there are links to online catalogues and tips on how a book can be purchased. David Eastment (1998, *ELT: Where are...*) describes the state of these sites and the relevance of their content six years ago:

Many publishers' sites provide little more than information on the books they produce, and how and where they can be obtained. There are noteworthy exceptions, however. The Heinemann site used to be interestingly innovative, with

examples of on-line material using Shockwave, for example, but seems to have fossilised in recent months...

The situation has changed since 1998 and nowadays many publishers including Longman (<http://www.longman-elt.com>), Cambridge (<http://uk.cambridge.org/elt/>), Oxford University Press (<http://www.oup.com/elt/>), Macmillan (<http://www.onestopenglish.com>) provide a lot more than just information on their own publications. For example, English teachers can find special assistance features for their profession, additional free resource sections to any textbook released by the publisher such as printable handouts, worksheets, and tape scripts. There are also interactive dictionaries available with many activities to practise vocabulary, spelling or pronunciation. These free resource sections are becoming more and more popular considering the cost of materials on the ELT market.

2.2.8. Language Reference Material

Although there are innumerable reference books in hardcopy there may be occasion when an on-line one would be more efficient. Warschauer and his colleagues (2000, 26 - 27) suggest, “*A Web of On-line Dictionaries* (<http://www.yourdictionary.com/>), [which] is a compendium of links to more than 800 dictionaries in more than 160 languages.” He also recommends *Webster Dictionary* (<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm>), *Collins Cobuild Student’s Dictionary Online* (<http://springbank.linguistics.ruhruni-bochum.de/ccsd/>), or *Collins CobuildDirect* (http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/direct_info.html) but it is necessary to subscribe to this one. The use of on-line dictionaries is popular even in the Czech Republic with 36 participants of the 2004 research stating that they use the on-line dictionary (<http://dictionary.reference.com/>, <http://www.slovník.cz>), (Appendix B, Table 5).

2.2.9. Downloadable Software Tools

There are some important downloads (usually free) without which English teachers could not make full use of the Internet. According to Warschauer and the co-writers (2000, 27 - 28) some of the most important ones include “software for listening to audio files and viewing video files (for example *RealPlayer*; <http://www.real.com>)“ and software “for viewing

pages in particular formats (for example Adobe Acrobat Reader; (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>)). “ Teachers can also find software to help them create their own web sites or even their own on-line activities such as Hot Potatoes (<http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/>). Dave Sperling (1998, 21) recommends a software archive called CELIA and considers it “a must for anyone interested in English language software.”

In addition, the fact that downloading from the Internet can be dangerous because of computer viruses should not be ignored. Prevention and safety is always better and easier than attempting to heal an infected computer (Warschauer, Shetzer and Maloni 2000; Felix 2003).

2.2.10. Sites for English Language Learning

The choice of sites created for English language teaching, for both teachers and students is wide ranging. The majority of these sites offer a variety of authority or teacher produced activities accompanied by printable worksheets, handouts, and typescripts, detailed lesson plans, or even downloadable software or interactive games to improve both students’ skills and sub skills at any age or level, links to discussion forums and chat rooms, job centres and bookstores. Amongst many, an example of such a web site could be *Dave’s ESL Cafe* (<http://eslcafe.com>), which is perhaps the most popular one in the world (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 28). The research made in the Czech Republic in spring 2004 revealed frequently used web sites to be <http://www.onestopenglish.com>, <http://www.aj.cz>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/> (Appendix B, Table 7). Of these the most frequently used web site (<http://www.onestopenglish.com>) offers a very similar range of features to Sperling’s *ESL Cafe*. However, because this web site has been created for commercial purposes by Macmillan Publishers Ltd., it mainly concentrates on English textbooks, and additional printable materials published by the company with detailed instructions and tips for teachers provided in a section called free resources. On top of that, it provides teachers with useful tips for their profession.

2.3. Development of the World Wide Web

The range of web sites has not always been so comprehensive and promising for ELT. By the year 1996, there were between 100 and 200 sites focused on English language teaching, most of them were based in the United States as not many European Schools, Colleges or Universities had Internet access (Eastment 1996, *The Internet and ELT*, 51). Eastment (1996) also claims that most of the web sites were worthy, but not very exciting and so the student would be advised to concentrate on conventional materials. He points out that there were only a few reading texts, some sound and video clips, and some interesting and innovative activities available and for that reason library resources would offer far more in terms of exercises, activities and ideas than the whole of the World Wide Web. Nowadays this may seem almost unbelievable, given the increasing and developing potential of the World Wide Web at present.

2.4. Copyright

Any material that is on the Web can be “copied, manipulated and re-distributed at virtually no costs” (Eastment 1996, *The Internet and ELT*, 45). This has many advantages and cost is definitely one of them. However, there are also numerous disadvantages and as Eastment (1996, *The Internet and ELT*, 45) stresses, a loss of “Intellectual Property Rights” is not the only one. Because the only control on the Internet is technical, there are no restrictions on quality and accuracy of on-line documents. This fact could cause a lot of problems especially in education and that is why training language teachers how to approach materials they find on the Web is considered to be essential for their professional development (Davis, as quoted in Felix 2003, 198).

2.5. Summary

Authorities agree on the fact that resources on the World Wide Web are unlimited. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, both the Internet and the World Wide Web are considered the ultimate tools for language learning and that is why their potential for

teacher development has also been presented in this chapter. However, “finding worthwhile resources on the Internet has never been easy, and as more and more sites are added, the task of sorting the wheat from the chaff is growing increasingly difficult” (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). Two years on and with even more web sites available on the Web, Mark Warschauer and the co-writers of the book (2000, 22) draw teachers’ attention to the same issue. They point out “just as is true when panning for gold, trying to find exactly what you are looking for on the web can be frustrating, challenging, and time-consuming.” Training teachers how to locate relevant materials is an important aspect of their professional development.

3. Web-search tools and techniques

Web-searching is pertinently characterised by Linda Harasim and the co-writers of the book called *Learning Networks* (2001, 219) who recommend that users should “expect the best, prepare for the worst.” Why? Because as they claim, there are problems even in paradise. Most inexperienced teachers feel like they spend a lot of time not getting anywhere because they come across links of no interest to them or links to web sites that no longer exist. Gavin Dudeney (2000, 17) describes the feelings of new users of the Internet and World Wide Web. “A familiar comment from new users is that there is nothing there, which is rather similar to visiting a hypermarket and saying there is nothing to buy.” He also witnesses comments like “I finally got connected, but I just can’t find anything”, or “I spent four hours looking round and didn’t see a single good site”, or even “I searched for material on Australia, but there were over seven million pages and I just didn’t know where to start” (2000, 2). As the previous chapter provides a long list of web sites and tools with a potential interest to English teachers, it is not a question of whether there is something there on the Web but the question is how to find it. That is why, to be able to search effectively without wasting too much time, an investment must be made to develop searching skills and strategies (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 32) to prevent teachers feeling that they are trying to find a needle in a haystack.

3.1. Web-search tools

Teachers claim that they are mostly successful only in those cases when somebody recommends a link to a useful web site or when they bookmark those web sites they want to use again (Wallace 1999, 4). Recommendations from ELT authorities, colleagues or friends are definitely worthwhile to start with. For this reason, a list of web sites recommended by the participants of the 2004 research has been put together (Appendix B, Table 7, 8). Teachers should always be clear and specific about what they are searching for. The choice of a suitable search tool is essential (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 19) as there are various ways in which the resources of the World Wide Web can be approached. If users need to search for general information about a topic, or if they just

want to browse or surf the Web, gateways sites, web rings, and directories would be recommended. On the other hand, if teachers want to search for specific information about a topic then the use of search engines and real language search sites (also called keyword searches) would be advised (Henniger 1999, 67). However, it is important to highlight at the beginning that none of the Web search systems can cover all of the databases on the Web on their own (Dudeney 2000, 27). What is more, “even all the search engines taken together do not reach the entire Web” (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 50). For this reason, it can be useful to try more search tools for the purpose of a search as different outcomes may be returned.

3.1.1. Gateways sites

With the use of gateways sites, users do not have to “reinvent the wheel” whenever they open the Web as the work has been done for them. Gateways sites are created by organisations or individuals who devote a lot of time to collecting useful links and resources, which they group into numerous easy-to-follow categories (Teeler and Gray 2000, 17). For this reason, gateways sites can be a helpful guide when looking at what is on the Web (Henigger 1999, 141). These web sites are regularly updated and so teachers will not come across links to web sites that no longer exist. Dave Sperling’s *ESL Cafe* (<http://eslcafe.com>) with three basic categories “Stuff for teachers”, “Stuff for students”, and “Stuff for everyone” is recommended by many authorities and is an example of such a web site. Users can surf the sections of chosen topics as they follow a site map or recommended links. Teeler and Gray (2000, 17) believe that Sperling’s *ESL Cafe* “should be a frequent stopover on the travels around the Internet.” It definitely belongs to frequently visited ones as this “award-winning Web site gets over one million hits a month and raves from around the world” (Clemes III 1998). In Clemens’s interview (1998), Sperling himself comments on the feedback to his *Cafe*:

I get feedback from all around the world. Creating something so visible tends to attract a lot of attention. The feedback has been really fantastic, and that's what keeps me going. Occasionally people suggest changes such as making a background less obtrusive. Sometimes I can make the changes, sometimes I can't. Overall, the feedback is really motivating.

For every English teacher, a gateways site like this can be a good first step in browsing or surfing the resources of the World Wide Web in an effective way.

3.1.2. Web rings

Web rings can be another solution for those teachers who want to search for general data on a specific topic (Henigger 1999). However, there is an important difference between gateways and web rings. Users of a web ring do not have to return to the main list or to a home page. Instead, they can search in circles of interrelated sites offering student activities, academic papers, or job opportunities (Henniger 1999; Teeler and Gray 2000). An example of such a site is simply called *WebRing* (<http://dir.webring.com/rw>) and consists of 46,700 manually organised rings offering 912,500 web sites. Those of special interest to English teachers can be easily found in the category “Schools and education”, for example, *Foreign Language Teachers WebRing*, which as written in its introduction includes “hands-on educational aids” or “how-to” articles to help teachers improve their teaching skills. In addition, there are also numerous printable handouts and materials, tips, articles and useful links to support users in their professional development. Other web rings worth mentioning in connection with English language teaching are the *EFL & ESL* web rings, *Best ESL/EFL/English sites*, or *Children’s ESL Webring* that specialises in children’s education. Most of the web sites on the main *WebRing* (<http://dir.webring.com/rw>) have been created in English. Generally, most of the web sites are available for free, however, there are some that require membership to allow users to browse the web pages.

3.1.3. Subject directories

As with gateways sites, subject directories are created and maintained by people who organise the web sites into a logical hierarchy (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 50). Because they are not created automatically, their databases may be limited in comparison to what is offered by the whole Web, but the databases are definitely more pertinent (Duggleby 2000, 33). One of the most well-known and best-loved directories is *Yahoo* (<http://www.yahoo.com>), which has been on the Web since 1994. This web site is updated

daily and offers a special search section for children called *Yahooligans* (<http://yahooligans.yahoo.com>) (Sperling 1998, 16 - 17). It is user friendly and offers various categories navigating to innumerable links, not only for kids. There are sections devoted to both teachers, called *Teacher's Guide*, and parents, called *Parent's Guide*. Another directory worth mentioning and not just connected with children is called *KinderStart* (<http://www.kinderstar.com>). There are sections like "Kids' Classroom", or "Kids' Playground" and can definitely provide teachers with many links and ideas to surf. Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni (2000, 50) further recommend "Open Directory Project" (<http://dmoz.org>) as it claims to be the largest human-edited directory on the Web covering about 4 million web sites in about 590,000 district categories. Clearly organised categories of search directories are valuable when users want to search for general information on a certain subject (Henniger 1999, 67).

3.1.4. Search engines

In comparison to the three search tools previously mentioned, search engines (also called keyword search tools) are indexed by robots, not humans. An example of such a search engine would be the very popular *Google* (<http://google.com>) or its famous alternatives *AltaVista* (<http://altavista.com>), *Excite* (<http://www.excite.com>) or *Hot Bot* (<http://www.hotbot.com>). Thanks to a program called *Webcrawler*, they are able to move through texts to index keywords that are closely reflective of the topics in the web page (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 50). When users type in a keyword they want to search for, the program recognises it in texts on the Web and returns links to web pages, referred to as hits containing the keyword (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 20). Some search engines even calculate "the degree of relationship so they can present the listing in order from most to least likely" in terms of what the user is looking for or even rank the web sites from most frequently visited to least (Warschauer 1995, *Virtual Connections*, 410; Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 52). For this reason, the higher the position on a list of returned hits does not necessarily mean the better the web site.

In addition, there is one more type of search engine that can be helpful. Meta-search engines, in comparison to normal search engines, do not have their own database. They search through databases of several other search tools at the same time to search for a larger amount of pages (Duggleby 2000, 34). *MetaCrawler* (<http://metacrawler.com/info.metac/search/help/about.htm>) is an example of such a meta-search engine. This site promotes itself by claiming that *MetaCrawler* is a leader in the search industry as it uses innovative meta-search technology to search the Web's top search tools such as *Google*, *Yahoo*, *Ask Jeeves*, and many more and so it is able to find the most suitable links in a few seconds. To be that effective and successful, it is necessary to know how to search and so it is possible to take a course recommended on the meta-search web site.

3.1.5. Real language search sites

Real language search sites still belong to the group of keyword search tools as the programs use keywords to be able to provide hits. However, there is a significant difference since their users are allowed to use real language. Normal questions can be asked instead of just typing in a keyword (Dudeney 2000, 25 – 27; Duggleby 2000, 34). An example of such a search site is *Ask Jeeves* (<http://www.ask.com>). Dudeney (2000, 27) also recommends its special section called *Ask Jeeves Kids* (<http://www.ajkids.com>), which searches for adult-free content web sites entirely dedicated to children. It is also possible to surf several categories (such as Fun&Games, New Resources, Study Tools, etc.] providing links to various worthwhile web sites including Kids' Domain. As discussed in the following chapter, new users may appreciate one of the big advantages of real language search sites. Since real language is used, their users do not have to deal with advanced searching techniques based on “proper syntax”.

3.2. Additional tips for effective searching

It often happens that a user receives hundreds of thousands of hits from a general search, causing frustration since browsing through all of them would take a long time. Choosing the right keyword is thus essential for a simple keyword search, which means the more the

specific the keyword the better. Another secret is to use “proper syntax” although it varies according to the search engine. For this reason, it is advisable to study the help section of each search site. The “proper syntax”, for example, includes the use of inverted commas (“”) to maintain the order and connection of the words in phrases, a plus sign (+) or AND for inclusions, a minus sign (-) or NOT for exclusions, OR for some words but not others, or NEAR for words close to each other. These expressions can also be combined. Wildcard, a star sign (*) is used to search for a word with multiple endings, two stars (**) are used when searching for all forms of a word (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 51; Dudeney 2000, 20; Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 22). As previously mentioned, when using real language search sites such as *Ask Jeeves*, users do not have to worry about “proper syntax” as real language is applied. Generally speaking, proper use of search techniques improves the success and effectiveness of results.

3.3. Summary

Users should be aware that various search sites have been created for different purposes. However, it is necessary to stress that as Duggleby (2000, 36) summarises it in her book *How to be an online tutor*: “there is a considerable overlap in the way they each work.” It means that users can do a keyword search using *Yahoo*, *Altavista* will allow them to ask questions, and *Excite* also provides a directory (Duggleby 2000, 36). Regular practice will help users improve their searching proficiency and uncover the possibilities provided by search site creators. In addition to this, repetition in trying to relocate web sites found from previous searches can be time consuming. For this reason, clear organisation, bookmarking and storing useful web sites is highly recommended.

As discussed in this chapter, web-searching is considered to be a core skill definitely worth developing. Once mastered, it enables users to make the most effective use of the resources of the World Wide Web. However, it is not the only core skill that needs to be developed. When receiving lists of hits, users should be aware of questions to ask or of criteria to apply in order to evaluate what they have found (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000). The following question can be a starting point for teachers as it draws their attention to critical

thinking. “How many pages are of any value?” (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). That everything on the Web is not worthwhile is expressively shown in Eastment’s (1996, *The Internet and ELT*, 32) comment about the World Wide Web as he calls it “a triumph of form over content...”

4. Critically evaluating web sites: strategies for English teachers

Although both the Internet and World Wide Web are often called the most useful research and development tools ever available, they can also be “the most misleading, dangerous and seductive. Every piece of information has to be weighed for possible flaws” (Ebert 1996, as quoted in Teeler and Gray, 2000, 16). As the only control of the Internet and World Wide Web possible is technical, a large number of Web materials are “unreliable or inaccurate” (Eastment 1996, *The Internet and ELT*, 45). Due to the fact that accuracy cannot be globally controlled, possible misinformation could undesirably hinder professional development. For this reason, learning how to evaluate web sites is for this reason considered to be a key aspect of teacher training (Davis, as quoted in Felix 2003, 199; Eastment 1998, *ELT and the New Technology*). What is more, according to Warschauer and his colleagues (2000, 49), the ability to evaluate web sites is nowadays considered a new informational literacy.

Accuracy is not the only key aspect that users should consider once they locate a particular web site. This chapter suggests a list of criteria that can help teachers think critically and so invest their time effectively into worthwhile sites.

4.1. Strategies: where to start

Users have to be aware of the fact that there are various web sites on an identical topic but created for different purposes by many authors. Full-text description often outlines to users what they can expect from a particular web site when they are provided with its link. Web addresses, or so-called Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) are also useful to pay attention to before clicking on a particular link. Having a close look at a Web address and its component parts can be an introductory step in critical thinking as it often provides users with a possibility to uncover useful data about the located web site in a few seconds (Duggleby 2000, 28).

4.1.1. The Web address and its component parts

Generally speaking, there are certain rules that need to be followed to locate a desired Web address. It is essential to remember to type in the web address in the exact way it is presented on the Internet as every single symbol incorporated in it has its own meaning. Web addresses never have spaces or @ symbol. When searching for a topic or web site, users do not have to worry about typing in a web site in a correct way as links are always provided and the users just click on the link. As with the following example, http://www.lesley.edu/library/guides/research/evaluating_web.html, individual parts of a web address can be analysed and a great deal deduced about the site. The first part of the address *http://* means hypertext transfer protocol, which is essential for connecting to web pages all around the world (Sperling 1998, 7 - 8). Although it is an essential component of every web address, it is not that important for critical evaluation.

The following part of the web address *www.lesley.edu* suggests the name of the web server or domain name where the particular web site is kept (Duggleby 2000, 29). This section of a web site is important for the user's critical approach. It suggests the purpose for which the web site was created as its last syllable (.edu) shows that it is an educational site, which indicates that its content may be of interest to English teachers. The name Lesley will definitely say a lot to those who know it as the name of a University. At this stage, this information may be enough for some users to decide that the web site is trust worthy.

Those users still uncertain may continue with evaluation of the web address. The next component of the address */library/guides/research/* represents "hierarchical file structure" and should be familiar to most users of computers. It shows the path by which the web site is located and also reflects the type of content the user may find (Duggleby 2000, 29). Users can be sure that material presented on a web site created by a library should not be misleading or inaccurate, as such material is evaluated by scholars or librarians. However, as discussed later on in this chapter, there are also other criteria that should be considered apart from accuracy and content.

The final part of a web address, which is in this case, *evaluating_web.html*, represents the name of the file the users are aiming at. The abbreviation, html, stands for hypertext

markup language, which is the format for all web pages (Duggleby 2000, 29 - 30). In this case, the name of the file suggests that the content of the material is concerned with the evaluation of web sites.

In addition, a geographic location of a web site is also often indicated so it is possible to see in which country the web site is located, for example, in the Czech Republic (.cz), in the United Kingdom (.uk), in Australia (.au), in Japan (.jp), in Germany (.de), etc. (Duggleby 2000, 29).

In summary, as can be seen from this brief analysis, although users can learn a lot from a web address even before they click on the link and open the first page it is not always possible to analyse every web site so easily. However, a quick look at a web address is often a starting point of critical evaluation.

4.1.2. Domains

All web sites are divided into several groups depending on the domain they have been created for. Every domain is represented by a syllable that reflects the purpose of a web site. These last syllables in a web address help teachers understand and critically evaluate where information comes from and who created it (Weaver 2003, 17 - 18).

The Lesley University web site (2003) shows how users can analyse the hits received from a simple search for basic information about the White House. One of the hits was www.whitehouse.gov. The last syllable of the address (.gov) suggests that the web site had been created by an official government agency. Another hit returned from the search was, www.whitehouse.net. The syllable (.net) indicates that the web site was created by an Internet Service Provider. The last syllable of the following site www.whitehouse.com means that it is a commercial web site(.com). Particularly in this case it is not appropriate for the purpose of teacher development or English teaching as it is a site with adult content. Unfortunately, this fact cannot be deduced from the address and that is why, every web site should be evaluated before showing to students or colleagues.

There are also other domains represented by the following final syllables such as (.mil), which denotes military sites, and (.org) for non-profit organisations, associations, societies or group sites. The following symbols (%7E), or (~) denote personal sites (Lesley University 2003). Personal sites are not necessarily useless, however, teachers should be more critical when evaluating them because unlike sites created by professionals, there is no publisher or domain owner guaranteeing quality (Barker and Obromsook 2004).

In summary, a closer look at web addresses and domains definitely helps users start their evaluation. However, as these examples showed, it was not enough. There are other aspects that users should check before they can be sure that a web site is reliable. To help teachers with an effective evaluation of web sites a list of criteria is provided in the following part of this chapter.

4.2. Criteria for evaluating web sites

Critical evaluation in general is inseparable from people's every day life. When choosing a film, theatre performance, restaurant or new clothes, men and women always apply various criteria to help them decide what they like. When teachers borrow resources from academic libraries, or buy them in specialised bookshops, they can be sure that librarians, publishers, or scholars have evaluated these materials. As the World Wide Web is such "a massive repository of information" (Warschauer, Shetzer and Meloni 2000, 49), anonymous sites that could lead to misinformation are quite common and so critical evaluation is essential. For this reason, teachers need to develop certain evaluating skills to make effective use of World Wide Web resources.

When choosing a web site or resources from the World Wide Web, a critical approach is essential. Application of evaluating criteria will help teachers choose what is worthwhile. To match teachers' needs, the choice of criteria for the purpose of web site evaluation was based on the outcomes of research made in 2004 where English teachers had an opportunity to comment on web sites they use in their profession. Their comments reflect both their positive and negative experience with content, currency, and design of web sites (Appendix B, Table 9, 10). In addition, the choice of criteria was also supported by a detailed study of

materials written by Alexander and Tate (1996), Barker and Obromsook (2004), Beck (1997), Brandt (1996), Cornell University Library (1996), Cunningham (2000), Duggleby (2000), Eastment (1998, *ELT: Where are...*), Grassian (1995), Graus (1999), Hinchliffe (1994), Kapoun (1998), Kirk (1996), Oliver, Herrington and Omari (1996), Ormondroyd (2001), Payton (1999), Smith (1997), Tillman (1995), The UC Berkley Library (1996), Lesley University (2003), The Ohio State University Libraries (1997), Southern Regional Educational Board (2004), Valenza (2001) and others. Although these authors evaluate identical factors, they have different labels or in some cases suggest different organisation of the criteria.

To illustrate this, three different authors and their distinct labelling and organisation of the criteria are compared and contrasted. Joan Ormondroyd (2001) divides the process of evaluation into two main sections, “Initial appraisal” and “Content Analyses”. According to her, the initial part of the process of critical analyses includes checking authority, currency, and a few other aspects useful for example when evaluating materials published by universities, such as edition and so on. The second stage of analyses focuses on content and considers for example, intended audience, objectivity, coverage, and writing style. Her evaluating strategy would definitely be useful for evaluating texts found on the Web.

In contrast to Ormondroyd’s division, Yahoo Inc. (2002) presents the so called “Four A’s” technique on their web site. First of them is “Accessibility”, which covers aspects such as navigability of web sites, Internet access speed (as discussed in 1.3.2.), or simply the fact that some of the web sites may not be accessible because they are not there any more. Their second “A” stands for “Accuracy” and also covers “Authorship”. However, Yahoo Inc. (2002) claims that this could easily be considered another “A”. Most authors have “Authorship” as a separate criterion, despite there being a very close connection between author and accuracy. The third “A” stands for “Appropriate” and deals mostly with the content of web sites and materials presented on them. The last “A” refers to the evaluation of design to see whether the web site is “Appealing”.

Finally, in contrast to the first two examples, in her book *How to be an Online Tutor*, Duggleby (2000, 95 - 96) lists seven criteria: “Purpose, Content, Authority, Currency,

Appearance, Navigability, and Other.” Although it can be seen that her arrangement is completely different, she mentions identical evaluating criteria to those considered in the first two examples just hidden under different labels.

In summary, there are always basic criteria that ought to be considered when evaluating web sites and materials presented on the Web in order to use the resources of the World Wide Web in an effective way. Their arrangement and application should depend on users preferences and needs.

4.2.1. Purpose/Aim

Teachers ought to be clear about what they are searching for, not only to search successfully but also because many web sites on seemingly identical topics may have been created for different purposes (as mentioned in 4.1.1.). As the last syllable of the domain name reflects the purpose of a web site, it is the first sign teachers should look for. Graphics and text used on a web site also reflect the aim of the web site in an obvious way (Lesley University 2003).

Potential purposes of web sites are summarised in a guide created by Lesley University (2003) entitled *Evaluating Web sites*. According to the guide, some web sites are produced for commercial purposes and so their authors might, or usually do, recommend only their own ideas, books, or materials as they would not present those that are considered competitive. Example of such web sites might be those made by a publishing house, for example, Macmillan and its famous and popular <http://www.onestopenenglish.com>. Other web sites are created purely for entertainment purposes and might be valuable for some aspects of language teaching but not so much for example, professional self-education. On the other hand, educational, institutional, informative, or personal teacher web sites may provide useful advice on other aspects of teacher development. To make the list complete, there are also web sites that are created to be highly persuasive, or have hidden “vested interests that might lead to bias” (Duggleby 2000, 95), or some may even be hoaxes (Lesley University 2003). In addition, Duggleby (2000, 95) also mentions one more fact that is closely related to this criterion. Teachers are advised to check for whom the web site has

been created because target users may differ in age or qualification, resulting in potentially differing purpose and content. In summary, this first criterion is an essential factor that needs to be considered and evaluated because, as discussed above, purposes may differ. However, closely connected criteria such as “Authority” and “Content” also need to be applied.

4.2.2. Authority

When choosing a film or book people commonly check the director or author before making a decision as to whether to go and watch it at the cinema or buy it from a bookshop. Web sites should be no exception as both individuals or organisations can create web sites serving the numerous purposes mentioned above. Eastment (1998, *ELT: Where are...*) suggests some important questions that must be asked such as; who are the authors, and are they trustworthy?

There is good reason to be suspicious if there is no author stated at all. Anonymous web sites in the same way as anonymous letters, hint that there might be a good reason for not revealing the author’s name. On the other hand, it does not always have to mean that a web site is anonymous if no author is indicated. It can also mean that the user had been linked to a subsidiary page and so it is useful to locate the home page to find who the author is (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). There are also other ways by which users can find the author’s name. It is recommended to check whether the header or footer is showing an affiliation. Sometimes the information about the author can be listed somewhere in the text, or it may also be useful to consult additional resources. Trying to search for the author’s name in a general search engine may also lead to a successful discovery (Beck 1997; Berkley Library 2003). If there is really no author, the next step should be to look for an organisation or an agency that may be taking responsibility for the web site (Barker and Obromsook 2004). The web address or the domain indicated by the last syllable of the URL can help in this case, or users can use similar techniques to those used while searching for the author’s name. If it is not possible to find the author’s name or the name of a person or

organisation responsible for the web site, users should be suspicious as most reputable authorities or organisations always state their name.

If the user has already found the name but does not know much about the person, it does not necessarily mean the author is untrustworthy. Apart from the author's name, it is also useful to know about his or her credentials as the author may be "just a hobbyist, self-proclaimed expert, or enthusiast" (Barker and Obromsook 2004). This information would be particularly useful when teachers want to use web sites and their content for their professional development. If teachers need to consult a professional issue, they have to check whether the author has the expertise to speak/write about the subject (Duggleby 2000, 95). Teachers should look for information about the author's "institutional affiliation, educational background, past writings, or experience" (Ormondroyd 2001). A positive sign is if other authorities in other reliable sources refer to the author. Last but not least, it may be useful if the author's contact details are provided in case teachers need further consultations.

It is not necessary to deal with all aspects suggested in the previous paragraph all the time. However, it is essential to evaluate "Authority" to be really sure that the material is trustworthy. The more teachers know about the author (not only positive reports), the easier it is to judge the following two criteria, "Content/Depth" and "Accuracy".

4.2.3. Content/Depth

There are no visual clues to suggest the size of a web site as is possible when looking at books on shelves in shops or libraries. Sometimes it is enough to see the number of pages and skim through the contents of a book that is always clearly presented on the front page (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). When talking about web sites, site maps have this function in the same way as contents pages in books. Site searches can also help search the site to help teachers find their way to a particular page and is similar to skimming a book. However, to evaluate the content of a web site, more time is needed to surf its sections to uncover what is hidden behind each page. Some sites may sound promising but after a closer look they may consist of only one or two pages, whereas others may be huge

(Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). That is another reason why evaluation of web sites is valuable.

To start an evaluation of a web page and its content, questions like What is there?, or How comprehensive is the material/page? should be asked. Content is closely related to the purpose for which the site was created and to its author. Some professionally created web sites may have many pages full of great links and materials, whereas others may be shallow and designed only to draw teachers' attention to products available only in bookshops. Once again anonymous web sites or those sites created by individuals are not necessarily bad. Again it depends on whether the author took his or her time to create more than just a personal web site. Eastment (1998, *ELT: Where are...*) describes his disappointment with such a site claiming to be "more than a personal page." It was called "Mr Aizen's English Learning Page" with various sections on idioms, jokes, tips for learners, technical writing, grammar, reading, and more. However, when Eastment tried to click on the grammar section, he realised that there were only a few examples and exercises on "Articles, Superlatives, Comparatives, and Prepositions." It is no wonder that the web site does not exist anymore. Unfortunately, due to the unpredictability of content of web sites, checking it and its depth is a crucial part of web site evaluation.

In addition, Duggleby (2000, 95) suggests one more question teachers should ask when evaluating the content of web sites. "How does it compare to others on the same subject?" Comparing and contrasting it against worthwhile web sites is a good strategy, which should often be applied. When evaluating content of a web site and its depth, there are two other criteria that come to mind. "Accuracy" and "Currency" need to be considered if teachers want to work with worthwhile and reliable web sites.

4.2.4. Accuracy

The vast and still growing number of web sites "warrants serious investigation and not a little scepticism" (Carrier 1997, as quoted in Eastment 1998 *ELT: Where are...*). Due to the fact that anyone can make a web page, teachers must understand that the author can be anybody. Yahoo Inc. (2002) supports this fact as they specify potential authors of web sites.

They can include “experts in a particular field, people with no clue of what they are writing about, and everyone in between.” This is not a reason to panic because the World Wide Web is valued and praised precisely for its innumerable materials that are reliable and accurate.

Despite the existence of modern technologies equipped with spellcheckers, there are still many web sites or texts presented on them that are full of “typographical errors and inconsistencies” (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). Unfortunately, editing misprints are not very common on this medium. Teachers come across misprints mostly while communicating via the Internet, however, even texts or web sites are not completely free of errors. For this reason, it is advisable to check whether any possible “typos, spelling errors, and poor grammar” are present on a desirable web site especially when teachers want to use printable handouts or materials for their students, or when they base their professional presentation on materials from the Web. Mistakes like this would result in their work looking unprofessional if they were not to correct such material used from the Web.

However, spelling and grammar are not the only aspects of accuracy that should be taken into account. “Style, tone, and language” may not be used appropriately in relation to the target audience, the purpose of the site and its content. In relation to that “correctness of the use of jargon” should be checked as well (Duggleby 2000, 95). In summary the examples of inaccuracy mentioned in this chapter could cause embarrassing moments or even serious problems, especially when considering teachers’ professional development. In relation to that, currency is another crucial criterion when talking about evaluating web pages and information provided on the Web.

4.2.5. Currency

People have never liked reading newspapers from past weeks and so buy up to date editions so that the news they are reading is current. The same is true of the Internet and World Wide Web and information provided on them needs to be regularly updated. Some web sites that are not updated may be totally useless or irrelevant. For example, when searching for information about the use of Information Technology in an English classroom, teachers

should look for updated information, as there have been great developments in this field during the last couple of years. A publisher's web site about latest releases without recent updates would be totally useless. Currency and therefore validity of information is for this reason one of the key aspects to be considered when evaluating web based information (Dudeney 2000, 96). On the other hand, regular updates may not be critical for web sites that serve other purposes. For example, interactive games and quizzes, printable work sheets or grammar exercises can be a few years old and the final effect will be the same as with materials that have been recently created.

In summary, there are two main facts the user should look for. "Ideally, each page should indicate when it was first created and when it was last updated" (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). The use of the expression "ideally" is appropriate as this information is often missing, or if available is difficult to find. If there is no indication of the date of a site's creation or latest update, it is then up to the user to decide whether the update is essential for their purpose or use. "Dead links" present on a web site suggest that the web site is not frequently used, that it was created a while ago, and that it was not been updated (Lesley University 2003).

4.2.6. Design

Some may say that design is not as important as for example, content, authority, or currency because it is just a matter of personal taste. However, what if colours used on the web site are not pleasant to look at, or even cause the text to be illegible. What if the web site is so long it makes orientation very difficult or even impossible (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). All texts should be clearly presented, pages should be well organised, and all icons should be easy to interpret. Flashing texts or animations, permanently appearing advertisements promoting conferences, workshops, or new releases, etc. can be very disturbing (Duggleby 2000, 96; Lesley University 2003). These are all examples of aspects that may cause users of the World Wide Web to subconsciously or even purposely favour some web sites over others.

When discussing web site design there are also other issues to be considered, not merely what is pleasing to teachers' eyes. One of these is definitely "speed of data transfer". Many users are connected to the Internet via telephone, which results in a slow speed of data transformation (Teeler and Gray 2000, 58). For example, downloading a large piece of writing with charts and graphics may only take a few seconds via a "fibre optic connection", however, the same file could take almost half an hour to download with the use of a slow modem connection (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). Despite the fact that most schools in the Czech Republic are not connected to the Internet via telephone, many of them have difficulties in downloading large graphics simply because they cannot afford better equipment. To help solve this problem, web site creators often use either small images or substitute large graphics with so called "thumbnails" (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). Thumbnails are miniatures of images that allow a more pleasant Web surfing experience. Although these images are very small they can be enlarged when desired (Sperling 1998, 119). However, there are still numerous pages with complex images that take hours to load making teachers wait in frustration.

"Navigation" is another aspect that should be considered when evaluating web sites and their design. The fact that there are many links provided on a web site may be very helpful, on the other hand, it is likely that users may become easily lost without finding desired information or sources, or even finding their way back to the home page (Eastment 1998, *ELT: Where are...*). Therefore, it is useful to look for web sites, which are divided into clear sections and categories. In order for a user to find their way back there should be an icon leading to the "home/index page" (Duggleby 2000, 96). Site maps are also very helpful tools which enable users to find their way around a site. Last but not least, navigation in particular should be taken into account when teachers decide to use web sites with their younger students as students lost in cyber space are not able to learn effectively.

4.3. Summary

Although the criteria mentioned in this chapter are closely related, teachers should always apply them with a different degree of importance depending on what they are looking for.

For example, if teachers want to evaluate web sites aimed at improving their teaching skills, they would evaluate them from a different point of view than they would those for a class project about the Royal family. As demonstrated in this chapter, content should not be the only consideration when deciding whether a particular web site is worthwhile. A list of six key criteria (Purpose/Aim, Authority, Content/Depth, Accuracy, Currency and Design) has been provided to ease the search for reliable web sites. All criteria presented above represent individual pieces, which when put together form a complete mosaic. The purpose of a web site is often to promote its author, who should be qualified to write or speak about the subject which should be comprehensive, clear, up-to-date and well presented.

Ultimately the evaluation of web sites is a core skill that all teachers need to develop and practise in order to be able to approach resources on the World Wide Web in an effective way (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 19). The following chapter puts to practice the core Internet skills suggested in this thesis (searching strategies and the application of the evaluating criteria) to explore their practicality and how their use varies depending on personal needs and purpose.

5. Search techniques and evaluating criteria in practice

Outcomes of the 2004 research show the many problems language teachers have to face when using the Internet. Often teachers cannot find what they need for their profession or, on the other hand, they are overloaded with too much data and do not know how to approach it. This thesis provides teachers with tips and strategies to help them deal with these problems in an effective way. In order to test how the suggested Web-search tools and evaluating criteria work in real practice and whether they match teacher's needs, it was essential to address English teachers again. Similarly to the 2004 research, English teachers were asked to participate in test searches and apply the evaluating criteria.

One of the disadvantages connected with the use of the Internet (as mentioned at the beginning of this thesis) is the way the potential of the Internet is presented to the teaching profession. This final research proved it to be true. Despite all the language teachers addressed (one female and four male between 20 – 30 years of their age) having attended courses focusing on the use of information technologies both at high school and university, and regularly use the Internet and World Wide Web in their profession, most of the content of this thesis was new to them. At this stage it is important to highlight that attending IT courses and regular use of the Internet and World Wide Web are considered to be more than just common skills of an English teacher, as following from the outcomes of the 2004 research presented in Appendix B and as highlighted in previous chapters, there are still teachers who cannot or even refused to use the Internet or World Wide Web in their profession at all. Fortunately, finding five willing teachers who were eager to experiment and develop was not that difficult. All of them agreed to practise suggested Web-searching methods and evaluation tools, as they wanted to learn new strategies that could be helpful (as they said) not only for their job. Many sincere thanks to the five English teachers who were willing to co-operate.

5.1. Testing process

The main aim of the testing process was to get feedback from the participants and monitor the practicality of the suggested strategies. In order to cover a range of subjects likely to be

of interest to English teachers, three basic search areas were assigned to the participants including, general information about a topic (for example festivals in English speaking countries,...), specific information with a focus on classroom activities (for example interactive spelling activities,...), and last but not least, information useful for professional growth (for example student motivation, time management,...). All of them were introduced to or studied the areas discussed in the thesis. After practising the recommended strategies, they provided feedback based on their individual experiences.

As presented in the introduction of this thesis, a research method based on a questionnaire was chosen to cover as many participants in numerous locations and to gather as much data as possible in a reasonable period of time for the purpose of the 2004 research. In contrast to this, for the purpose of the final test search another type of research method was used. Personal semi-structured interviews with the participants were a more appropriate and valuable technique this time (considering the number of participants, and the topic) to gain necessary and detailed comments on the issues discussed in this thesis (Denscombe 2003). The choice of the informants was based on specific criteria. They were required to have some IT knowledge to understand the issues discussed in the thesis and an experience with the use of the Internet.

5.1.1. Feedback 1

The first test participant uses the Internet daily and as he claims not only for his profession. He agrees that the use of this medium is essential in modern cultures and cannot imagine living and working without it anymore. It is surprising then that he has never heard of or used other search tools besides search engines and search directories. For this reason, he was happy to be introduced to and develop new searching skills. Before this experience he only used the *Google* search engine when looking for web sites in English or for general and specific information. In order to search for information written in Czech, he had been using the *Centrum.cz* subject directory. His experience is described below.

Firstly, in his opinion he can imagine all the suggested search techniques (gateways sites, web rings, subject directories, search engines, meta-search engines, and real language

search sites) to be useful but agrees they are not best used in all cases. His claim supports the fact that teachers should choose a search tool according to the purpose of their search. As he never wants to waste time by trying to search through more than one search tool to be able to compare results of different search tools, he really liked the meta-search engine *MetaCrawler* (<http://metacrawler.com>), which searches through numerous search engines providing him with hits from all of them in a very short time. He was able to compare the results of the search in a few seconds by just skimming through the page very quickly and for this reason; he calls this search tool “fabulous.” He started using it regularly and praises its user-friendly navigability and transparently simple design.

Secondly, he was not very convinced by the practicality of the use of web rings and real language search sites as he believes that the use of search engines, meta-search engines and subject directories is sufficient to match his needs.

Thirdly, as he commented, another turning point in the way he used to approach the Web was when he read about the web address and its components. In the past he read only the abstracts used to introduce hits provided by a search tool and he never checked the web address components. However, by relying on these abstracts, promising web sites often turned out to be far from his expectations. The study of domains and web site addresses helped him realise the differences in the purpose for which particular web sites had been created. He tried to click on different web sites with different domains to compare and check, as he wanted to observe whether it works. It did in the case of the following domains (.com, .edu, and .org). However, he agrees with what was also concluded in the thesis that although checking the web site itself may often be useful, he does not want to rely only on this information as he does not find it satisfactory enough. As recommended in the thesis, checking the web address is only a starting point.

For the purpose of the search and application of evaluating criteria, he chose the following topics of current interest to him. The first search aims at lyrics by Suzanne Vega to be used for various purposes in his lessons. Secondly, in order to enrich listening activities, he decided to search for inventive listening activities with the focus on broadcasting. Last but not least, he was also interested in searching for ideas to help him maintain discipline in his

lessons, which is a common concern of many teachers. To compare the outcomes of the searches, he decided to use his favourite search engine *Google* and a meta-search engine called *MetaCrawler* in order to practise this tool new to him.

To start with, it is important to highlight that his first contact with the suggested list of evaluating criteria was a little bit negative as he claimed there was no time for their application and that it would be a waste of time. However, shortly after the first search when he started checking the hits it was possible to observe that he started to apply some of the criteria automatically as his first reactions to some web sites were “oh no, I really hate these web sites where they only sell their own products.” It was at this moment he realised that he had only been clicking on web sites provided on commercial domains. Other comments followed: “I cannot stand the organisation of this page, it is so confusing”, “this article is not scientific enough”, “oh no, this web site is downloading so slowly. I bet, there will be a pop-up advertisement”, and so on. As can be seen from these examples, although some teachers may not be aware of a specific list of criteria, they have their own personal preferences according to which they try to find matching web sites. All five participants agreed on the fact that once they were provided with the list of criteria, although they did not apply all of them in all cases, their evaluation seemed to be easier and more structured as they could use it as guide.

As observed in the following test searches, all criteria do not necessarily have to be applied all the time and with the same importance for the evaluation to be effective. The application is based on his own personal preferences on web sites connected with the three assigned topics.

Suzanne Vega lyrics

While checking hits of chosen web sites, the first aspect always mentioned was closely connected with the design of a particular web site. For example, <http://www.sing365.com> is according to the participant badly organised and downloading took too long as there was a free screen saver pop-up advertisement. These two facts were unacceptable for the user so he did not continue with checking the lyrics and moved on to another link. <http://www.lyred.com/lyrics> also appeared to be poorly set out, however, when the user realised

that this web site provides a section offering translations of the lyrics, chaotic design was no longer as important and the user continued researching. The excitement did not last long as there were no contributions to the section and so the user could not find any translations. That was the moment to return to the list of hits. <http://www.alwaysontherun.net> was what the participant wanted to find. This greatly organised web site looked really promising, as there were no disturbing advertisements, it was easy to use and the design was very pleasing to look at. Unfortunately, when the user tried to click on the link to the lyrics, the author of the web site apologised that all the lyrics had to be removed, as he could not afford to pay for the rights. Although the fourth web site <http://www.azlyrics.com/v/vega.html> nearly discouraged the user from the outset (as again there was a pop-up advertisement), it turned out to be what he wanted. The user accepted this site as it was well organised, had all the desired lyrics and no spelling mistakes. As can be seen from these examples, the user mostly requires high design standards and favoured them to anything else. When satisfied with the design, he moved on to evaluating the content and accuracy. The importance of the application of the criteria was, however, different when searching for the next topic.

Listening activities (broadcasting)

The first web site the user decided to check was <http://www.cslaval.qc.ca/cureantoinelabelle/nseignement/deam/listenspeak.html>. Although he did not like the design much he continued checking the content, which was more important to him at this stage. He ended up leaving the page shortly afterwards as it contained only four links and no tips. At this stage, he decided to use the strategy of checking the web address components before clicking on the web site and said it helped a lot. The following address seemed to be very promising and it proved to be true, as he soon found out that the web site <http://www.ohiou.edu/esl/english/listening.html#other> has got great links to radios, downloadable software and helpful tips. In this case, content and its depth were favoured to any other criterion.

Maintaining classroom discipline

The last topic searched by the first participant of the test evaluation shows even more differences in the application of the criteria. In the first case, design followed by content seemed to be the most important criteria. Content was examined with greater importance

when searching for the second topic, whereas in the case of the third topic, the importance of authority and content seemed to predominate. The first web site the user decided to check was <http://www.honorlevel.com>. Although he claimed that this web site was professionally created, he did not like the content and could not agree with the point of view of the sites authors. For this reason he considered the site to be unacceptable and was disappointed that it was the first web site returned by *Google*. According to him, the following web site (<http://www.adhdsolution.com/teachers>) is considered unreliable as some of the claims presented on it were determined as unscholarly. On the other hand, according to the user, the following discussion forum was very helpful (<http://www.cortland.edu/flteach/faq/faq-discipline.html#maintaining>). In addition, he pointed out that the structure and organisation of the texts presented on a web page suggests whether it is scientific and thus trustworthy to be used for professional development.

In summary, the participant of this test search was very pleased with the outcomes of the meta-search engine as there were about 85 hits provided and not nearly three million like from the *Google* search engine. He considered it to be a very effective tool which helped him find everything he wanted in a short time. In addition to this, he found checking the web address to be a helpful strategy and will continue using it, especially concerning domains and the purpose for which particular web sites have been created. He also found the set of criteria “comprehensive and exhausting” although he agrees that it is not necessary to use all of them all the time. This approach can be clearly seen in his evaluating process above, for example when researching topics connected with professional development, he mostly stresses the importance of authority, content and its depth. Surprisingly, he did not consider currency essential to be evaluated at all and claiming that he almost never checks it. In the end, he stated that this test search and the application of evaluating criteria “helped him structure his thoughts about the use of the Internet and even find completely new fields of interest.”

5.1.2. Feedback 2

The second participant in the test search and evaluation is a female English teacher who has teaching experience both in the Czech Republic and abroad. She uses the Internet almost every day and like the first participant she uses it not only for her profession. When she heard about this test search she was pleased that she could participate in it as she stated that she has problems in locating good web sites that focus especially on tips for English teachers.

Although she uses more than one search engine (*Yahoo*, *Google*, and *Excite*), she often complains about not being able to find useful activities or materials. That is why she does not try to search for them on the Web anymore, as she finds it too time consuming. It is not that the search engines she uses are not good enough or ineffective, the reason is that they should be used for different types of searches. As explained in the thesis, search engines are very useful when the user searches for particular information, as a specific keyword is easy to be located rather than a general topic. Because she has never heard of any other search tools besides search engines, she appreciated those suggested in the thesis, in particular, gateways sites considering her problem with locating information created specifically for English teachers.

Reading activities

She started with the search engine *Google* but most of the web sites were advertising books about reading activities and she could not find any tips, lesson plans or ideas for reading activities. Time was going quickly and she still could not find anything that would at least slightly satisfy her. At this point the values of gateways sites were presented to her. Given they are created by professionals with similar interests, they promise innumerable categories full of useful ideas that are easy to follow. Once she tried one of the gateways sites (in this case it was <http://www.eslcafe.com>) she could not believe how easy it can be to find what she is interested in. She trusted the content, as it had been created by ELT authority Dave Sperling, and so she did not apply any other criteria. She was, however, frustrated that she had not known about this option earlier in her career. This issue of the Internet not being presented to teachers in the way both it and they deserve is highlighted

earlier in the thesis. Instead, teachers have to rely only on their own creativity, which they often claim to be impossible because it is too time consuming. As in this example, abandoning the use of the Internet as a tool for locating lesson activities and materials is often the next step. In the end she really appreciated this tool along with web rings as they helped her solve her problem. She was not convinced by the merits of meta-search engines and is still happy to use her favourite search engines for specific topic searches.

When the components of a web address were brought to her attention, she commented she never checked them, as she believed the text provided by search engines to be sufficient. However, she added that she checks web sites one by one anyway, by reading the extracts because she does not want to miss anything. In hindsight she realised how time consuming this is. When searching for the next topic (which was assigned to be specific) she tried checking the origin of the web sites through their domains.

Differentiation in the classroom

This topic is of great interest to her because (as she stated) she wants to provide opportunities for all her pupils to work at their own pace through a variety of relevant learning activities. Whilst checking the hits from the *Google* search engine, she automatically skipped those sites with the domain .com. She needed a trustworthy web site with a scholarly content and so mainly researched those with the domain .edu, .org, and .net. When concerning this topic with the focus on professional development, from her point of view, she highlighted the importance of the following criteria. Authority was the first of them as she always checks contact details if provided and authors credentials, or organisation the author works for. She also believes that accuracy and currency are both very important when searching for web sites on this topic. Apart from a web site's user-friendly navigability, she does not consider design that crucial. She paid attention to the content and its depth when searching for web sites on this topic, as many web sites returned from the search provided her with numerous citations from various books but without any textual coherence, which was unacceptable to her.

Student activities – Halloween

According to her, there is never enough time to search for interesting materials for festivals during a school year and that was the reason why she chose Halloween as the main topic of her final test search. Again she used a keyword search engine, *Google*. Although <http://www.halloween.com> sounded promising, it turned out to be very rude and too scary for students. There were dead links and a pop-up advertisement appeared right from the beginning, so she returned to the list of hits. In contrast, the second choice was more successful. One of the web address components suggests that the content of the web site was aimed at children (holidays), <http://wilstar.com/holidays/halloween.htm>. The web site provided her with interesting data about the history of this festival, poems, print friendly versions of the content and useful tips for “Trick or Treat” activities. In this instance she did not check the author and currency, as according to her it was not as important as in the previous search. In addition, if the second participant had tried one of the gateways sites or ELT web rings, she could have found tips and activities directly designed for the use in language lessons.

To sum up, the second participant in the test search really appreciated the opportunity to learn about various Web-search tools. She was struggling with searching for activities and materials that could be used for her students and so she particularly liked gateways sites and the idea of a web ring. The choice of the evaluating criteria reflected her chosen topic and was similar to the first participant. She applied different criteria when evaluating web sites she wanted to use for her professional development as opposed to those she wanted to use in her class. She believes that by practising these strategies teachers could use the Internet more effectively and save a lot of time. On the other hand, she points out that many teachers would not devote their free time to learning and practising these skills, as they would find this effort time consuming. As she commented in the end, if she did not have this opportunity to test these search tools she would still only be using search engines and would not try to find materials for her students, as she had believed it to be impossible.

5.1.3. Feedback 3

The third participant in the test search says he uses the Internet very often and that he is almost always happy with the results of his searches although he only uses the search engines *Google* and *Yahoo*. According to him, the secret is detailed specification of the topic searched and the use of inverted commas (“”). When the hits are not satisfactory he repeatedly changes the keyword to get the outcomes he is after. This strategy has been mentioned in the thesis as well; the choice of the keyword is essential for the success of a search.

Because the participant has never heard of web rings and real language search sites their values were presented to him. He appreciated real language search sites in particular because it is not necessary to deal with the problem of choosing a specific keyword. As he pointed out, this specific aspect of real language search sites could be especially valuable for those teachers who are learning to search for the first time, or when using search tools with students. In his book *The Internet and the Language Classroom*, Gavin Dudeney (2000, 26) also stresses the value of real language search sites considering their use in the class. According to him, it is a useful practice for students “in forming a correct question using Wh- words, punctuation, etc.”

Bath, Great Britain

For the purpose of the test search he had chosen three topics that are currently of great interest to him. Due to an upcoming school trip to England, he needed some data about the town Bath and so used *Google*, his favourite search engine. During this search it was possible to observe his technique of changing the keyword described at the beginning of his feedback. He started with the key phrase “Bath - historical sights” but the search was not very satisfying for him. <http://www.guidez.net> sounded promising but there were just a few links, e-mail contacts, and very limited information about the town. He decided to change the keywords to specify the search more, which proved successful. He typed in “Bath tourist info” and soon after that he found what he wanted. <http://www.visitbath.co.uk> provided him with the type of information he was looking for and in a very short period of time. As stated earlier in the thesis and highlighted again here, perseverance is important when

carrying out Internet searches. When checking this web site, he also paid attention to the date it was created as he was trying to find the date of the latest updated. It is more than relevant for this topic because it would be really unpleasant to arrive in the town with a whole class and realise that the nice hotel they had chosen on a web site is no longer there. He did not consider it relevant to evaluate any other criteria apart from content, which was the first aspect he evaluated.

Concentration span

This topic is currently very important to him, as he wants to learn more about ways to maintain young learners concentration. He stresses the importance of a trustworthy author and reliable content. To locate information he is after in a short time, he uses a function “ctrl f” to locate keywords in text on a web page. This strategy saves time and gives him clear ideas in what context the topic is discussed. For example, <http://www.pathfinder-one.com/pages/articles/june98teaching.html> sounded promising according to the abstract provided by the search engine. However, when the participant located the key phrase “concentration span” by the use of “ctrl f” he realised that the author only mentions that teachers should be aware of learners’ concentration span, which although true, this was not enough for him. He needed some tips and ideas to learn more and so develop. The strategy of checking components of web addresses helped him this time. He did not try a new search but with a quick look at a web address he located a web site that helped him with what he needed. According to him, the web site <http://www.cambridge.com.uk/elt/playway/articles> suggested a source with trustworthy reliable content relating to his topic.

Christmas activities

Because the test search happened soon after Christmas he still remembered the problems caused by a lack of materials in December and was the reason he choose this topic. Unfortunately for him, his search was not very successful. He decided to use search engines again but was disappointed as those web sites he checked, for example, <http://www.holidayzone.com> or <http://www.easyfunschool.com/blessed.pdf> were either chaotic, with few links and not really providing much, or too religious which was unacceptable to him. Web sites created specifically for English teachers (for example gateways sites) would have

been very helpful at this stage. For example, <http://www.onestopenglish.com>, <http://www.kidsdomain.com>, or <http://www.eslcafe.com> provide enormous resources that would satisfy one's needs for a long time.

In summary, the third participant stresses that the Internet is indispensable for him in his profession. He agrees on the fact that nowadays Web-searching and evaluating skills ought to be considered new literacies. According to him, learning these skills should be an obvious part of professional development although he is aware of the problematic presentation of the Internet to the teaching profession. What is more, many of his colleagues are afraid of modern technologies and some of them do not use the Internet at all, as they do not like changes in the way they work. He would like to encourage all teachers as he highlights that teachers should be models for their students and adds that it is embarrassing that some students know more about information technologies in general than their teachers.

5.1.4. Feedback 4

The fourth participant mostly uses the *Google* search engine when he searches for web sites in English and the subject directory *Seznam.cz* when he needs to find data in Czech. He has never heard of any other search tools and does not use proper syntax when searching, as he does not consider it important. His strategy is to keep searching again and again till he finds something that looks trustworthy, which as he admits, is very time consuming and therefore not very effective. When he was asked to participate in this test search he accepted without hesitation as he is eager to investigate anything that can help him develop these Internet skills.

For the purpose of the test search, the fourth participant chose the following three topics. Firstly, as there are a few dyslectic students in his class, he wants to focus on web sites that could provide him with some helpful advice. Secondly, he would like to create a quiz about the Tower of London for his older students and so needs some data about this popular tourist sight. Last but not least, as some of his younger students have problems with

pronunciation, he would like to enlarge his collection of activities to help them practise this sub-skill.

Student activities – pronunciation

Many of the hits he was returned from *Google* advertised only books dealing with this topic, which was very disappointing for him. One of these examples was <http://www.eslgold.com> and again as can be seen, it is provided on a commercial domain. However, when asked whether he checks the web address for its components he replied that he never does, as he considers the abstract provided by the search engine to be sufficient. Soon after that he remembered that one of his colleagues had recommended to him a web site created for English teachers <http://www.onestopenglish.com>. Although it is a commercial web site with its creators working for Macmillan publishing house and so recommending mostly materials published entirely by this company, this web site provides users with fabulous resources, articles, and tips. He quickly found what he wanted on this web site, and since it had been created by professionals he trusted the content, its accuracy and currency. In addition, he also liked its user-friendly navigation. This proves the fact that when teachers know where to search for information, they do not have to spend hours in frustration by surfing the Web without success.

The Tower of London

The aim of this search was to find a short historical description and some interesting facts about this sight that could be used in the creation of a quiz. The choice of search tool was effective this time. The participant used the *Google* search engine, which returned numerous hits. The first chosen web address sounded really promising (<http://www.toweroflondontour.com>) as it offered a virtual tour. Unfortunately, the user was very disappointed right from the beginning. Being a commercial web site it was full of flashing and disturbing advertisements. What was more, very loud music started playing once the user opened the page. He did not wait to evaluate it as the music helped him judge the web site. He had one more almost identical experience with the following web site http://www.camelotintl.com/tower_site/warders/index.html, which is a commercial web site also accompanied by loud music and omnipresent advertisements. The third try was, however,

successful. The web site <http://www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/renaissance/toweroflondon/towerlondon.html> provided the user with what he evaluated as useful with not overly long history notes, great photographs, additional links and all well set out.

Dyslexia

There was one surprising comment from the fourth participant that came in connection with the last topic of his search as he was thinking aloud what criteria he should apply when evaluating the web sites focusing on his professional development. He said “unreliable people would not bother to make a web site on this topic.” This may or may not be true, however, when searching for web sites for the purpose of professional development it is advisable to consider how trustworthy the author of a web site is. When he was evaluating the hits from a search engine, he was paying attention to the content of a web site, its depth, and accuracy. The following web sites matched his needs <http://www.dyslexia.com> and <http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk>.

In summary, the fourth participant does not consider checking the components of a web site essential. As he stated he is eager to learn more about different search tools and has set this as a future goal. He concluded that his current search technique is not very satisfying and believes the results could be better if more time is devoted to practising the criteria outlined in the thesis. In addition, according to him the list of criteria is a useful guide for those teachers who want to learn to narrow their selection of web sites. He considers all of them important, however, as with his three colleagues and as stated in the thesis, it is not necessary to apply all criteria all the time.

5.1.5. Feedback 5

The fifth and last participant is a native speaker with English teaching experience in the Czech Republic. He believes that most teachers when introduced to the Internet are only exposed to basic search techniques such as *Google* and so may be unaware of the potential of, for example web rings or other ways to gather information and resources from the Web. For this reason he agrees that an effort should be invested in developing more advanced searching skills in order to approach the Internet in a more effective way. Sample searches

presented in the previous four feedback sections demonstrate that gateways sites and subject directories are more effective when searching for general information or often with topics connected with language teaching. On the other hand, search engines and meta-search engines proved to be more effective when searching for specific information.

When discussing checking the components of web addresses, the participant highlighted that he is always prepared to explore any site regardless of its origin but then focuses more on its critical evaluation based on other criteria. However, he considers this strategy of checking web address components useful in identifying commercial sites (.com).

He also agrees with the fact that the list of criteria is comprehensive and as he explains with the following examples he also applies them according to the purpose of the search (as was suggested in the thesis and by previous participants). According to him, an illustration or puzzle may be useful regardless of the site, provided he can assess its accuracy. When he searches for sites focusing on methodology, grammar, etc. he pays attention to greater detail, for example, he would be wary of personal sites or those that have not been through any sort of review or assessment process, and the credibility of the author is very important for him in this instance. He summarises, speaking generally, that the order of importance of the criteria for him would be Accuracy, Authority, Content/Depth, Purpose/Aim, Design, Currency. He considers this list of criteria to be extremely useful checklist, which can really help users when they are faced with a mountain of information. According to him, it greatly assists users to work their way through the enormous number of hits returned from an average search.

5.2. Summary

As shown in this chapter, participants of the test searches agree that the suggested Web search tools if mastered can help teachers approach the Internet and everything that is available to the teaching profession on the World Wide Web in a more effective way. The problem is often that teachers are not aware of the various options and persist in using basic search methods. Presenting Web search tools and their practical use during IT courses

would help teachers develop in this field and ultimately approach the Internet and World Wide Web in a much more effective way.

Secondly, identifying web address components and the use of proper syntax is not often common during the participants' general searches, however, once this field was introduced to them in greater detail they agreed that these strategies could make their searches more effective. It is important to stress at this point that more time and teacher's persistence is needed to get to the stage when identifying web address components and the use of proper syntax is automatic and so considered to be natural and useful in order to get effective results.

Thirdly, all five participants of the test search agree that evaluation of web sites is essential because of the number of sites available on the Web. Generally speaking, the participants consider the list of evaluating criteria suggested in the thesis exhaustive. In general, as is true with any skill being learnt or practised for the first time, most of the actions connected with core Internet skills require regular practise in order to make their use automatic. In other words, the list of criteria is only a guide designed to provide users with all possible areas that may need to be considered when searching for web sites. It is user's responsibility to learn to choose relevant criteria depending on the purpose of their particular search, personal preferences and requirements. The users' test searches and subsequent critical evaluation of returned sites demonstrate how the criteria were and should be used in practise. For example, when evaluating web sites with the content focusing on teacher development, Content/Depth, Authority, and Accuracy should be given preference. In contrast, Currency would be crucial in other cases, for example when checking new textbook releases as that data could be irrelevant if not updated, etc.

Although acquiring the core Internet skills presented in this thesis may seem a long-term process requiring teachers' determination, regular practise and subsequent use, and although it may for this reason be considered very time consuming and demanding, once teachers master these core Internet skills, they will be able to effectively reach Internet and World Wide Web resources invaluable for their professional development.

Conclusion

As discussed and shown in particular examples in this thesis, the Internet along with the World Wide Web are considered to have great potential and to be very useful tools not only for ELT in general but also for teacher development. The number of Internet tools and Web resources available is vast and constantly growing. Teachers can communicate with organisations and their colleagues, read or contribute to on-line professional journals and magazines, learn via on-line conferences and workshops, shop in virtual bookshops, visit virtual libraries and download innumerable resources either authentic or those created specifically for language teaching.

Nevertheless, following from the 2004 research made in the Czech Republic, a lack of awareness of the potential of the Internet and of the World Wide Web as well as a lack of information technology knowledge and practical experience often results in many teachers not feeling motivated to even start thinking about using the Internet and the Web. On the other hand, there are also many teachers who although aware of the values of these media often have to face numerous obstacles such as inappropriate school equipment or problematic time scheduling and so cannot use this media as often or on the scale they would desire. As a result the idea of using the Internet both in language classrooms and for professional growth is often considered to be frustrating. Those teachers though who are lucky enough to have the equipment and are willing to learn and explore have an opportunity to develop professionally with the help of these incredible media.

However, to be able to appreciate all of the potential benefits teachers should first devote some time to develop certain essential core skills in order to make effective use of all the tools and resources provided by the Internet and World Wide Web. Those include Web-searching techniques via the use of Web-search tools, the application of evaluating criteria, bookmarking useful sites, and last but not least, following certain rules of Netiquette in order to communicate effectively via the Internet (Duggleby 2000, 48).

The advantage of knowing about various Web-search tools is expressed by more effective web searching as different tools have been created for different purposes. Some are more effective when searching for specific information, while others when general data is

desired. Those strategies need to be introduced and practised in order to discover their potential benefits for professional growth. Because the number of resources on the World Wide Web is immense, the better the technique used for Web-searching the less time is needed to find what is desired. Time is required to be invested in discovering the particular values of search techniques including web address components evaluation, use of proper syntax, or the right choice of a search tool itself depending on the aim of the search.

As shown in the chapter five, to make final decisions about the usefulness of a particular web site, specific evaluating criteria need to be applied. As demonstrated, teacher's awareness of the criteria presented in this thesis eases the choice of particular web sites. However, as shown in specific examples, the list of criteria cannot be applied as a whole, with its order and importance differing depending on the aim of the search and personal preferences.

Although acquiring core Internet skills may often seem to be a very time-consuming and frustrating process for many teachers (teachers often stop or never start to use the Internet and World Wide Web for these reasons) it is the first and very important stage of professional development. Once mastered, those skills enable teachers to reach the full potential offered by the Internet and World Wide Web. Closely connected and often parallel to this first stage of professional development is the following stage, based on the use of the chosen resources that are more than vast. If planned and used in an effective way there is no doubt that these resources would greatly assist teachers in their professional development.

The Internet and World Wide Web are presented in this thesis as useful media while at the same time attention is also drawn to particular disadvantages and drawbacks connected with their use. Ultimately it is up to teachers themselves to decide whether they are willing to incorporate these media into their lessons or to support their professional growth by the innumerable resources provided by the Internet and World Wide Web. However, as we move into the 21st century for generations of students, reading writing and arithmetic as the only literacies will no longer be enough. Therefore the question now remains; how long will those teachers who continue to be resistant towards the use of the Internet and World

Wide Web be allowed to do so? New modern literacies connected with the use of the Internet will join the three previously mentioned and be considered valuable and maybe essential in order for teachers to gradually develop in their profession and so to be able to prepare younger generations for future life in the modern world of the 21st century.

Resumé

Od prvního dne vzniku se Internet těšil velkému zájmu odborníků a posléze i široké veřejnosti. Nové tisíciletí zaznamenalo značný vývoj technologií. Pro život v moderní společnosti již nestačí umět pouze číst, psát a počítat. K těmto, v současné době již samozřejmým, dovednostem se pod vlivem vývoje v moderní společnosti 21. století přidávají i mnohé další. Pedagogové musí být schopni vstřebávat veškeré změny stále se rozvíjejícího moderního světa, neboť stojí před nelehkým úkolem připravit mladé generace na to, aby v takovém světě obstály. Z toho důvodu je důležité, aby si učitelé uvědomovali důležitost nepřetržitého sebevzdělávání. Internet se tak zdá být k tomuto účelu vhodným prostředkem, neboť pedagogům nabízí nejen nepřehledné množství užitečných pomůcek a materiálů, ale i bezpočet prostředků vhodných k profesnímu rozvoji, jež jsou jinak jen obtížně dostupné.

Na druhou stranu, výzkumu na českých základních školách ukázal, že učitelé často narážejí na četné překážky a problémy zabraňující jejich práci s počítači a tedy i s Internetem. Mezi mnohé patří nejen nevyhovující technické vybavení škol, či omezený přístup do počítačových učeben, ale například také to, že učitelé neumějí s počítači pracovat, v mnohých případech vůbec netuší, co jim Internet nabízí, nebo nevědí, jakým způsobem najít na Internetu, co potřebují. V neposlední řadě je pro ně velkým problémem, jak si z nepřehledného množství zdrojů informací vybrat. Není tedy divu, že je pro mnohé z nich tato skutečnost velice frustrující či dokonce nepřijatelná. Někteří učitelé již Internet úplně zavrhnou nebo po zkušenostech svých kolegů ani nezačali uvažovat o možnosti, využít Internet jako vhodný prostředek profesního rozvoje.

Cílem diplomové práce je tedy nejen nastínit potenciál Internetu, který může učitelům pomoci v jejich nelehké profesi, ale zároveň představit četné techniky, které by učitelům práci s Internetem usnadnily. Patří mezi ně například četné metody vyhledávání a kritického hodnocení internetových stránek a jejich obsahu. Tvorba zmíněných kritérií se opírala o konkrétní potřeby samotných učitelů, zmapované během výzkumu na jaře roku 2004. V samotném závěru pak pět dobrovolníků z řad učitelů provedlo test navrhovaných metod, s cílem prověřit jejich praktické využití.

Jak již bylo zmíněno, potenciál jaký Internet pedagogům nabízí je nesmírný. Jedním z mnoha kladů je možnost téměř neomezeně komunikovat s lidmi (a tedy i s odborníky) z celého světa v jakoukoliv denní dobu za poměrně přijatelných finančních nákladů. Z toho důvodu bylo vytvořeno bezpočet synchronních či asynchronních diskusních fór a velmi oblíbená je i elektronická pošta. Učitelé tak mají možnost konzultovat své profesní problémy či osobně přispívat ke zkvalitňování samotné profese. Z výzkumu realizovaného v loňském roce vyplynulo, že mezi 86 dotázanými učiteli patří elektronická pošta mezi nejužívanější prostředky komunikace na Internetu.

Bezpochyby nejvíce využíván na Internetu je Web, neboli síť vzájemně propojených dokumentů. Učitelé tak pro svůj profesní rozvoj mohou využít nemalé nabídky odborných periodik psaných především v anglickém jazyce. Přístupné jsou také různé virtuální knihovny. Na užívatelích je avšak mnohdy vyžadováno členství, které je poskytováno pouze po zaplacení poplatku. Na Webu jsou také dostupná i jiná média běžně známá ze všedního života, jako jsou noviny, časopisy nebo televizní kanály. Mnoho dalších internetových stránek, i když ne přímo spojených s výukou anglického jazyka, může dost dobře posloužit jako užitečný zdroj informací. Patří mezi ně například stránky zabývající se uměním, filmem či hudbou. Další velmi oblíbené stránky vhodné především pro profesní rozvoj učitelů jsou stránky vytvořené profesionálními organizacemi a asociacemi. Nabízejí velmi užitečné informace nejen o novinkách v pedagogickém světě, ale také o rozmanitých konferencích a školeních, jež jsou mnohdy pořádány i na Internetu. V neposlední řadě zde také učitelé najdou zajímavé stránky plné rad a materiálů, které pro ně vytvořili jejich kolegové či nakladatelé.

Je však velmi důležité si uvědomit, že efektivní využití všeho, co Internet pedagogům nabízí, vyžaduje osvojení jistých dovedností. Mnoho učitelů tento fakt opomíjí. Často si stěžují, že nemohou na Webu nic najít a že tam snad ani nic není. Předchozí řádky nastínily, že otázkou není, zda má Internet pedagogům co nabídnout, ale jak vše potřebné najít.

Vedle četných vyhledávačů, které uživatelům umožňují vyhledávat prostřednictvím klíčových slov, Internet nabízí mnoho dalších možností. Jednou z možností jsou stránky, na kterých odborníci doporučují výčet užitečných stránek a fungují tedy jako jistá brána vedoucí do úhledně vybaveného kabinetu plného materiálů či tvořivých nápadů. Bylo by dobré, aby učitelé začali objevovat vlastnosti různých rozmanitých způsobů vyhledávání. Například při vyhledávání specifické informace je mnohem efektivnější využít vyhledávače pracujícího na základě klíčových slov. Na druhou stranu, při vyhledávání obecných témat by bylo mnohem efektivnější využít kategorizovaných vyhledávačů, jejichž přehlednost usnadní uživatelům snadnější orientaci v jednotlivých cílových oblastech. Výběr vhodné metody vyhledávání tak v této souvislosti může velice ovlivnit úspěšnost samotného vyhledávání.

Samotný výběr vhodného prostředku vyhledávání není to jediné, čemu by uživatelé měli věnovat pozornost. Aplikace správných vyhledávacích strategií, které se vyhledávač od vyhledávače mohou lišit (patří mezi ně nejen správné zadávání, ale i správná volba samotného klíčového hesla), může a obvykle také ovlivní výsledky každého vyhledávání. Před prvním vyhledáváním na nevyzkoušeném vyhledávači je tak doporučováno zjistit, jakým způsobem konkrétní vyhledávač funguje. Za tímto účelem jsou poskytovány rady uživatelům ve speciálních sekcích mnoha stránek nazvaných „Help“.

Využití efektivních strategií vyhledávání však není zdaleka jedinou dovedností, kterou by si učitelé měli osvojit, pokud chtějí Internet využívat efektivně. Dalším velkým problémem, kterému učitelé jen stěží čelí, je velké množství informací, jež je při hledání konkrétních dat doslova zavalí. Osvojování dovednosti kritického hodnocení internetových stránek a informací na nich prezentovaných by jim mělo usnadnit tomuto problému čelit.

Ve všedním životě lidé mnohdy podvědomě aplikují jistá kritéria, která rozhodují při jejich konečném rozhodnutí. Učitelé by si tak měli osvojit podobnou dovednost kritického hodnocení a aplikovat ji při výběru důvěryhodných zdrojů na Webu. Jedním z důvodů je fakt, že množství internetových stránek denně roste a je tedy z čeho vybírat. Dalším, a možná ještě pádnějším důvodem je fakt, že není možné kontrolovat, kdo a co na Webu

publikuje. Uživatelé tak musí být velice ostražití a dobře si rozmyslet, v jaké stránky vloží svoji důvěru.

Na základě preferencí pedagogů a odborné literatury bylo sestaveno šest základních kritérií, které pomohou uživatelům rozhodnout, zda vybranou stránku považovat za věrohodnou. Patří mezi ně důvod, pro který byla konkrétní stránka vytvořena, její autor, samotný obsah stránky, její jazyková správnost, aktuálnost a v neposlední řadě pak design v souvislosti s vizuální prezentací stránky a jejím ovládním. Učitelé by však měli zmíněný výčet kritérií považovat za jakýsi obecný návod. Záleží pouze na nich, zda budou považovat za nezbytně nutné aplikovat všechna či jen některá konkrétní kritéria. Budou tak reflektovat vlastní potřeby a preference. Společně s výčtem hodnotících kritérií, mají pedagogové k dispozici další užitečné strategie, které jim mohou pomoci usnadnit výběr internetových stránek užitečných nejen k profesnímu rozvoji. Kontrola webové adresy a jejích dílčích součástí patří mezi ně.

Diplomová práce si kladla za cíl představit a shrnout určité pracovní postupy, jež by mohly pedagogům ulehčit nesnadnou práci s Internetem. Bylo tedy nezbytně nutné oslovit některé dobrovolníky z jejich řad, zda by byli ochotni navrhované postupy vyzkoušet v praxi a následně je pak okomentovat.

S testem souhlasilo pět učitelů anglického jazyka. Všichni se po provedeném testu shodli na faktu, že osvojení navrhovaných vyhledávacích technik může učitelům opravdu velmi zefektivnit práci s Internetem. I přesto, že jim mnohé z vyhledávacích strategií byly představeny poprvé (jako například kontrola webových adres a jejich dílčích částí), všichni účastníci se opět shodli, že jejich využívání pozitivně ovlivnilo konečné výsledky jejich vyhledávání. Navrhovaný výčet kritérií považují za úplný a souhlasí s faktem, že není nezbytně nutné všechna kritéria aplikovat během každého vyhledávání, protože v jistých případech jsou některá kritéria nedůležitá až irelevantní. To potvrzuje fakt, že záleží na každém uživateli, jaká z navrhovaných kritérií si vybere v závislosti na osobních preferencích a cílech jednotlivých vyhledávání.

Osvojování si všech navrhovaných dovedností vyžaduje mnoho práce a vytrvalosti. Jejich získávání pomůže učitelům snadněji dosáhnout onoho nesmírného potenciálu Internetu,

který je právem považován za cenný zdroj nejen informací, ale i nástrojů, jež mohou pomoci učitelům v celoživotním profesním rozvoji a tím i k zefektivnění jejich pedagogické činnosti.

Na konkrétních příkladech zde bylo ukázáno, že není zrovna snadné onoho potenciálu dosáhnout. Učitelé si často stěžují, že jim práce s tímto médiem trvá moc dlouho a že oni tolik volného času nemají. Diplomová práce proto navrhla konkrétní dovednosti, jejichž nabytím budou učitelé připraveni lépe čelit překážkám s nimiž se prozatím potýkají při práci s tímto moderním médiem. Průběžné prohlubování zmiňovaných dovedností je v současné době některými odborníky považováno za stejně důležité, jako tomu bylo v minulosti například se čtením, psaním a počítáním (Eastment, Hardisty and Windeatt 2000, 19). Komunikace prostřednictvím Internetu, efektivní vyhledávání zdrojů prezentovaných na Internetu, jejich kritické hodnocení pomocí konkrétních hodnotících kritérií a následné uchování pro snazší pravidelné využití v budoucnosti by tak mělo neodmyslitelně patřit k jedné z důležitých etap profesního rozvoje.

References

- Ahmed, Khurshid, Greville Corbett, Margaret Rogers and Roland Sussex. 1985. *Computers, Language Learning and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, Jan and Marsha Ann Tate 1996. "Evaluating Web Resources," Wolfgram Memorial Library, Widener University. Updated 1999. <http://www2.widener.edu/Wolfgram-Memorial-Library/webevaluation/webeval.htm> [viewed 22 July, 2004].
- Barker, Joe and Saifon Obromsook. "Evaluating Web Pages Techniques," to Apply and Questiones to Ask. University of California, Berkley. Updated 27 July 2004. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html> [viewed 16 September 2004].
- Beck, Susan E. 1997. "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly, or Why It's a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources," Institute for Technology-Assisted Learning, New Mexico State University. Updated 16 April 2004. <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Blackie, David. 1995. The Internet – what's in it for an EFLer? *IATEFL Newsletter*. Issue No. 129, November, page 10 – 11.
- Brandt, D. Scott. 1996. "Evaluating Information on the Internet." <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/itd/techman/evaluate.html> [viewed 23 July 2004].
- Chou, Candace, Zafar Syed and Mark Warschauer. 1996. *Internet basics for language professionals*. Honolulu, HI: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.
- Clemes III, George H. 1998. A Man with a Virtual Passion. *ESL magazine*. May/June. Updated 2004. <http://www.eslmag.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=27> [viewed 15 August 2004].
- Corbel, Chris, Paul Gruba and Helen Enright. 2002. *Taking the Web to Task*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching a Research.
- Cornell University (Library). 1996. "Evaluating web sites: Criteria and Tools," Cornell University. Updated 24 February 2004. <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webeval.html> [viewed 16 September 2004].
- Crystal, David. 2001. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham Florez, MaryAnn. 2000. *Q & A: Finding and Evaluating Adult ESL Resources on the World Wide Web*. Macquarie University, Sydney. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. National Center for ESL Literacy Education, via Eric Documents. No. ED-99-CO-0008.
- Denscombe, Martyn. 2003. *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects*. Maidenhead, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

- Donaghy, Kieran. 2003. "Using The Internet to Motivate Learners." *E-mesh*.
http://www.e-mesh.com/members/teachers/pdf/tc_art_CALL003.pdf [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Dudeny, Gavin. 2000. *The Internet and the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duggleby, Julia. 2000. *How to Be an Online Tutor*. Aldershot, England: Gower.
- Eastment, David. 1998. "ELT: Where are the good web pages?" Updated 10 January 2000.
<http://www.eastment.com/eval.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- . 1998. "ELT and the New Technology: The Next Five Years." Updated 10 January 2000. <http://www.eastment.com/next5.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- . 1996. *The Internet and ELT. The Impact of the Internet on English Language Teaching*. Manchester: The British Council.
- . 1996. The Internet for Teachers and Learners. *Modern English Teacher*. Vol. 5, No. 2, April, 58 – 82.
- , David Hardisty and Scott Windeatt. 2000. *The Internet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Education World. "Criteria of evaluation of web sites," Education World.
<http://www.education-world.com/help/FAQ.shtml#submission> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Felix, Uschi. 1998. *Virtual language learning finding the gems amongst the pebbles*. Melbourne: Language Australia. The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Ltd.
- Grassian, Esther. 1995. "Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources." UCLA College Library. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/critical/> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Graus, Johan. 1999. "An evaluation of the usefulness of the Internet in the EFL classroom." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nijmegen. <http://home.plex.nl/~jgraus/> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Hackett, Lachlan. 1996. The Internet and e-mail: useful tools for foreign language teaching and learning. *ON-CALL*. Vol. 10, No. 1, September, page 15 – 20.
- Hardisty, David and Scott Windeatt. 1989. *CALL*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henniger, Maureen. 1999. *Don't Just Surf: Effective research strategies for the Net*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Hinchliffe, Lisa Janicke. 1994. "Resource Selection and Information Evaluation." Updated 29 May 1997. <http://alexia.lisuiuc.edu/~janicke/Eval.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Kapoun, Jim. 1998. Teaching Undergrads WEB Evaluation: A Guide for Library Instruction. *C&RL News*. Vol. 59 No. 7. Updated 11 May 2004.

- <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crlnews/backissues1998/julyaugust6/teachingundergrads.htm> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Karayan, Silva and Judith Crowe. 1997. "Student Perceptions of Electronic Discussion Groups," *T.H.E. Journal Online*. April.
<http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A1367.cfm> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Kestenbaum, Teri. 1999. "Educational Benefits of Online Learning." Blackboard, Inc.
http://support.blackboard.net/components/Benefits_of_Online_Learning.doc.
[viewed 22 July 2004].
- Kirk, Elizabeth, E. 1996. "Evaluating Information Found on the Internet." The Sheridan Libraries of the Johns Hopkins University.
<http://www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/> [viewed 16 September 2004].
- Kubala, Tom. 1998. Addressing Student Needs: Teaching on the Internet. *T.H.E. Journal*. March. <http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A2026.cfm> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Lesley University, Cambridge (Ludcke Library). 2003. "Evaluating Web Sites." Updated 9 September 2003.
http://www.lesley.edu/library/guides/research/evaluating_web.html [viewed 13 September 2004].
- Li, Rong-chang and Roger Hart. 1996. What can the World Wide Web offer to ESL teachers? *TESOL Journal*. Vol. 6, No. 2, Winter, page 5 – 10.
- Macmillan. 2004. I-teach: your guide to Internet supported teaching. *Professional Support: I-teach*. Issue 1. Macmillan. Updated 2004.
[http://www.onestopenglish.com/ProfessionalSupport/iteach/i_teach.htm [viewed 13 August 2004].
- Naughton, John. 1999. *A Brief History of the Future: The Origins of the Internet*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Ohio State University Libraries. 1997. "Evaluating Web Sites, Overview, Key Ideas," The Ohio State Library. Updated 17 April 2003.
<http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor/les1/index.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Oliver, Ron, Jan Herrington and Arshad Omari. 1996. "Creating Effective Instructional Materials for the World Wide Web."
<http://elrond.scam.ecu.edu.au/oliver/docs/96/AUSWEB1d.pdf> [viewed 23 July 2004].
- Ormondroyd, Joan. 2001. "Critically Analysing Information Sources," Cornell University Library. Updated 15 August 2003. <http://cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill26.htm>
[viewed 22 July 2004].
- Payton, Tammy. 1999. "Web Evaluation for Secondary Grades".
<http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/edu/rubric3.htm> [viewed 26 July 2004].

- Pazderová, Sabina. 2004. OUP website – a must for students and teachers. *Novinky z Oxfordu*, [News from Oxford], p. 6.
- Serdyukov, Peter and Laurel Smith Stvan. 2001. *ESL/EFL Web sites: what do users need and what can they expect to find there?* University of Utah. From: Eric Documents. No. ED456818. Macquarie University, Sydney. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Smith, Alastagir, G. 1997. "Testing the Surf: Criteria for Evaluating Internet Information Resources." *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* 8, no. 3. Victoria University of Wellington, NZ. <http://info.lib.uh.edu/pr/v8/n3/smit8n3.html> [viewed 16 September 2004].
- Southern Regional Education Board, "Criteria for Evaluating Web sites," *EvaluTech*. Updated 26 July 2004. <http://www.evalutech.sreb.org/criteria/web.asp> [viewed 25 August 2004].
- Sperling, Dave. 1998. *Dave Sperling's Internet Guide*. NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.
- . 1997. *The Internet for English Language Teachers*. NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.
- Teeler, Dede and Peta Gray. 2000. *How to Use the Internet in ELT*. Harlow, Essex, England: Longman.
- Tella, Seppo. 1992. "Boys, girls and e-mail: a case study in Finnish senior secondary schools." Research Report 110. University of Helsinki: Department of Teacher Education. <http://www.helsinki.fi/~tella/110abst.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- T.H.E. Journal Online. 1997. Student Perceptions of Electronic Discussion Groups. *T.H.E. Journal*. April. Updated July 2004. <http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A1367.cfm> [viewed 12 August 2004].
- Tillman, Hope N. 1995. "Evaluating Quality on the Net." Updated 28 March 2003. <http://www.hopetillman.com/findqual.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Trotman, Wayne. 2000. "Aspects of the Internet and Their Possibilities for ELT: A Survey Review." http://www.e-mesh.com/members/teachers/pdf/tc_art_CALL002.pdf [viewed 22 July 2004].
- . 1998. Web sites on the Internet for ELT: a closer look at what they contain. *IATEFL ISSUES*. No. 144. http://www.eayrs.com/ELT/publications/IATEFL_Issues/Archives/Texts/144Trotman.html [viewed 16 September 2004].
- UC Berkley University (Library). 1996. "Critical Evaluation of Resources." The UV Berkley University. Updated 26 September 2003. <http://www.lib.berkley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Evaluation.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Valenza, Joyce. 2001. "Evaluating Web Pages: A WebQuest". Updated 31 December 2001. <http://mciu.org/~spjvweb/evalwebteach.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].

- Wallace, Patricia M. 1999. *The Psychology of the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Warschauer, Mark. 1999. *Electronic Literacies: Language, Culture, and Power in Online Education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Warschauer, Mark. (ed.) 1995. *Virtual connections: online activities & projects for networking language learners*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.
- . 1995. *E-mail for English teaching: bringing the Internet and computer learning networks into the language classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
- , Heidi Shetzer and Christine Meloni. 2000. *Internet for English teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
- , and Deborah Healey. 1998. Computers and language learning: an overview. *Language Teaching* 31 (2), 57-71. <http://www.gse.uci.edu/markw/overview.html> [viewed 23 July 2004].
- , and P. Fawn Whittaker. 1997. The Internet for English Teaching: Guidelines for Teachers. Originally published in the *TESL Journal*, Vol. III, No. 10. <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Warschauer-Internet.html> [viewed 22 July 2004].
- Weaver, Belinda. 2003. *Catch the Wave: how to find good information on the Internet fast*. Melbourne: R.M.I.T. University Press.
- Woods, Anthony, Paul Fletcher and Arthur Hughes. 1986. *Statistics in Language Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zounek, Jiří and Jaroslav Kříž. 2001. *Internet pro pedagogy*. [*Internet for Teachers*]. Prague: Grada.

Appendix

A. Questionnaires

English version of the questionnaire used in the 2004 research (page 1)

School:

Age:

Date:

Sex: male, female

USE OF THE INTERNET IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

First of all, I would like to thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Please mark the statements you agree with; do not mark those you do not agree with, and when required please use your own words. All information provided by you in the questionnaire will be used only for the purposes of my diploma work.

Hana Jelínková, student, University of Pardubice

1. I think that use of the Internet...

- a) is not necessary in ELT.
- b) is just a waste of time for English teachers.
- c) is effective if planned in advance.
- d) is helpful in ELT.
- e) supports or enriches pedagogical qualification.
- f) other opinion... (please express)

2. I have had an opportunity...

- a) to attend long-term courses aimed at general use of the Internet (approx.....hrs).
- b) to attend long-term courses specifically aimed at use of the Internet in ELT (approx.....hrs).
- c) to participate in one-off training aimed at general use of the Internet (approx.....hrs).
- d) to participate in one-off training specifically aimed at use of the Internet in ELT (approx.....hrs).
- e) to attend one or more of the courses mentioned above but I did not go.

2.1 I haven't had an opportunity to attend any of the courses or training mentioned above.

2.2 I have been learning to use the Internet myself.

3. I use the Internet in ELT because...

- a) we have appropriate equipment at school.
- b) it helps me a lot at work.
- c) it motivates pupils.
- d) I believe that use of the Internet can enrich my lessons.
- e) other reason... (please add)

3.1 I use the Internet...

- a) for gaining information about new products (textbooks, aids, etc.).
- b) as a material resource: **ba)** pictures, **bb)** lesson plans, **bc)** ready made activities, **bd)** dictionary, **be)** software, **bf)** articles to be adapted for level of students, **bg)** MP3 as listening activities, **bh)** films, **bi)** games, **bj)** quizzes, **bk)** others... (please add)
- c) for my professional development: **ca)** I discuss my problems on-line with teachers from other schools, **cb)** I read on-line magazines or books about methodology, **cc)** others... (please add)
- d) for sending emails: **da)** private, **db)** administrative, **dc)** professional.
- e) in any other way... (please add)

4. I would use the Internet if...

- a) we had proper equipment at school.
- b) I had more time.
- c) I could attend courses.
- d) I knew about its potential for teachers.
- e) other reason... (please add)

5. I don't use the Internet at all because...

- a) we don't have appropriate equipment at school.
- b) pupils just get disrupted or overexcited by it.
- c) I don't have good experiences with its use in my lessons.
- d) I can't use it.
- e) I don't have time for it.
- f) other reason... (please add)

Turn over
1/2

English version of the questionnaire used in the 2004 research (page 2)

Please fill in this page if you use the Internet in ELT. If you do NOT use the Internet for the purpose of ELT, please do NOT fill in this page. I would like to thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

6. My most favourite/frequently used web pages are...

E.g.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) <input type="checkbox"/> www.onestopenglish.com | f) <input type="checkbox"/> www.linguistic-funland.com |
| b) <input type="checkbox"/> www.dictionary.com | g) <input type="checkbox"/> www.teenadvice.com |
| c) <input type="checkbox"/> www.lyrics.com | h) <input type="checkbox"/> www.tips-tricks.com |
| d) <input type="checkbox"/> http://i-net.cz/eltclub.com | i) <input type="checkbox"/> http://headlines.yehoo.com |
| e) <input type="checkbox"/> www.classroom.com | j) <input type="checkbox"/> others... (please add) |

7. I like it because... / I do not like it because...

Firstly, write down the web page and then express specifically your assessment, please. E.g. Design, access, up-dates, content, activities, links, methodology, etc.

a) Web page: _____

Positive assessment	Negative assessment	Suggested changes

b) Web page: _____

Positive assessment	Negative assessment	Suggested changes

c) Web page: _____

Positive assessment	Negative assessment	Suggested changes

Thank you very much for filling in my questionnaire, which will help to gain invaluable information for those who create ELT web pages for us, English teachers.
Regards, Hana Jelínková

Turn over
2/2

Czech version of the questionnaire used in the 2004 research (page 1)

Škola:

Věk:

Datum:

Pohlaví: muž, žena

VYUŽITÍ INTERNETU JAKO JEDNOHO Z PROSTŘEDKŮ VÝUKY ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA

Předem Vám děkují za to, že všechny vybovující odpovědi označíte takto křížkem . Pokud Vám žádná odpověď z nabídky nevyhovuje, nekrájkujte. V ostatních případech prosím doplňte slovy. Vámi poskytnuté informace budou použity jen v diplomové práci. Hana Jelínková, studentka Univerzity Pardubice

1. Myslím si, že využití Internetu...

- a) není pro výuku anglického jazyka nezbytně nutné.
- b) pouze zabírá učitelům už tak drahocenný volný čas.
- c) přispívá ke zkvalitnění výuky, pokud se předem naplánuje.
- d) učitelům usnadňuje práci.
- e) přispívá ke zvýšení pedagogické kvalifikace.
- f) jiný názor... (Prosím o stručné vyjádření.)

2. Měl(a) jsem možnost...

- a) dlouhodobě chodit do kurzů zaměřených na používání Internetu (cca.....hod).
- b) dlouhodobě chodit do kurzů přímo zaměřených na využívání Internetu pro výuku cizího jazyka (cca.....hod).
- c) navštívit příležitostně jednodenní či několikahodinové školení zaměřené na používání Internetu (cca.....hod).
- d) navštívit příležitostně jednodenní či několikahodinové školení přímo zaměřené na využívání Internetu pro výuku cizího jazyka (cca.....hod).
- e) navštívit některé z výše zmíněných kurzů, ale nevyužil(a) jsem ji.

2.1 Neměl(a) jsem příležitost navštěvovat podobná školení či kurzy.

2.2 Jsem samouk.

3. Internet používám, protože...

- a) ve škole máme odpovídající vybavení.
- b) mi usnadňuje práci.
- c) je motivací pro žáky.
- d) věřím, že jeho využití obohacuje moje hodiny.
- e) jiný důvod... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)

3.1 Internet využívám...

- a) k získávání informací o novinkách na trhu (učebnice, pomůcky, apod.)
- b) jako zdroj materiálů a pomůcek: **ba**) obrázky, **bb**) plány, **bc**) připravené aktivity, **bd**) slovník, **be**) interaktivní software pro žáky, **bf**) autentické články, které přizpůsobím žákům, **bg**) MP3 na poslech, **bh**) filmy, **bi**) hry, **bj**) kvízy, **bk**) jiné... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)
- c) jako prostředek sebevzdělávání: **ca**) diskutuji své nápady či problémy s učiteli z jiných škol, **cb**) používám odbornou on-line literaturu a tiskoviny, **cc**) jinak... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)
- d) na posílání elektronické pošty: **da**) soukromé, **db**) úřední, **dc**) odborné.
- e) jinak... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)

4. Internet bych používal(a),...

- a) kdyby bylo ve škole odpovídající vybavení.
- b) kdybych měl(a) více času.
- c) kdybych mohl(a) navštěvovat kurzy/školení.
- d) kdybych věděl(a), co Internet učitelům umožňuje.
- e) jiný důvod... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)

1. Internet nepoužívám vůbec, protože...

- a) nemáme ve škole vhodné vybavení.
- b) to pouze rozptyluje žáky při práci.
- c) s tím nemám dobrou zkušenost.
- d) ho neumím používat.
- e) nemám na to čas.
- f) jiný důvod... (Prosím o stručnou odpověď.)

Prosím obraťte

1/2

Czech version of the questionnaire used in the 2004 research (page 2)

Pokud pro svoji profesi pedagoga nepoužíváte Internet vůbec, tuto stranu nevyplňujte. V opačném případě prosím pokračujte ve vyplňování. Mnobokrát Vám děkuji za Váš čas a spolupráci.

6. Nejvíce jsem si oblíbil(a)/nejčastěji používám (internetové stránky)...

Např.:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>a) <input type="checkbox"/> www.onestopenglish.com</p> <p>b) <input type="checkbox"/> www.dictionary.com</p> <p>c) <input type="checkbox"/> www.lyrics.com</p> <p>d) <input type="checkbox"/> http://i-net.cz/eltclub.com</p> <p>e) <input type="checkbox"/> www.classroom.com</p> | <p>f) <input type="checkbox"/> www.linguistic-funland.com</p> <p>g) <input type="checkbox"/> www.teenadvice.com</p> <p>h) <input type="checkbox"/> www.tips-tricks.com</p> <p>i) <input type="checkbox"/> http://headlines.yehoo.com</p> <p>j) <input type="checkbox"/> jiné... (prosím uveďte)</p> |
|--|--|

7. Oblíbil(a) jsem si ji, protože.../Nejsem spokojen(a) s...

Uveďte prosím vždy nejprve internetovou stránku a s čím konkrétně jste či nejste spokojen(a), jaké změny byste případně uvítal(a). Např.: design stránky, jednoduchost ovládání, odborný obsah a jeho aktuálnost (celková nabídka, aktivity, „links“, metodika, atd.

a) Název stránky: _____

Pozitivní hodnocení	Negativní hodnocení	Případné změny

b) Název stránky: _____

Pozitivní hodnocení	Negativní hodnocení	Případné změny

c) Název stránky: _____

Pozitivní hodnocení	Negativní hodnocení	Případné změny

Mnobokrát děkuji za vyplnění mého dotazníku. Příspěl(a) jste tím k získání nezbytných informací pro tvůrce stávajících či budoucích internetových stránek, které by Vám měly především pomáhat. S úctou Hana Jelínková

*Prosím obraťte
2/2*

B. Outcomes of the 2004 research

Table 1

Participants (all teachers of English language)

Participants														
School					Age					Sex		Mother tongue		
primary school	high school	language school	grammar school	junior high school*	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 and over	female	male	Czech	English	
66	0	19	0	1	47	22	16	1	0	71	15	74	12	
Total				86					86		86		86	

* translation of víceleté gymnázium

Table 2

Teachers' opinions about the use of the Internet in ELT

1. I think that use of the Internet...					
a) is not necessary in ELT.	b) is just a waste of time for English teachers.	c) is effective if planned in advance.	d) is helpful in ELT.	e) supports or enriches pedagogical qualification.	f) other opinion...
15	0	72	44	33	2

Other opinions:

1. Great motivation for children.
2. Contact with teachers from the whole world.

Table 3
IT courses/training of English teachers

2. I have had an opportunity...	
a) to attend long-term courses aimed at general use of the Internet.	10
b) to attend long-term courses specifically aimed at use of the Internet in ELT.	4
c) to participate in one-off training aimed at general use of the Internet.	27
d) to participate in one-off training specifically aimed at use of the Internet in ELT.	19
e) to attend one or more of the courses mentioned above but I did not go.	0
2.1 I haven't had an opportunity to attend any of the courses or training mentioned above.	14
2.2 I have been learning to use the Internet myself.	29

Table 4
Use of the Internet

3.1 I use the Internet...	
34	a) for gaining information about new products (textbooks, aids, etc.).
78	b) as a material resource:
42	ba) pictures
10	bb) lesson plans
46	bc) ready made activities
36	bd) dictionary
22	be) software
38	bf) articles to be adopted for level of students
15	bg) MP3 as listening activities
8	bh) films
29	bi) games
39	bj) quizzes
1	bk) others...
39	c) for my professional development:
5	ca) I discuss my problems on-line with teachers from other schools.
21	cb) I read on-line magazines or books about methodology.
3	cc) others...
72	d) for sending emails:
62	da) private
37	db) administrative
23	dc) professional
5	e) in any other way...

Other ways:

1. General newspapers and magazines
2. Advertisement, recruitment
3. General use: travel, banking, etc.
4. News in Czech or English
5. Entertainment

Table 5
Reasons why some teachers do not use the Internet

4. I would use the Internet if...				
a) we had proper equipment at school.	b) I had more time.	c) I could attend courses.	d) I knew about its potential for teachers.	e) other reason...
11	25	7	8	2

Other reasons:

1. Very limited access to computer laboratory.
2. Exploiting the Internet is time consuming.

Table 6
Reasons, why some teachers refused to use the Internet

5. I don't use the Internet at all because...					
a) we don't have appropriate equipment at school.	b) pupils just get disrupted or overexcited by it.	c) I don't have good experiences with its use in my lessons.	d) I can't use it.	e) I don't have time for it.	f) other reason...
4	1	2	2	6	3

Other reasons:

1. The use of language software is sufficient.
2. There are too many children and only a few computers.
3. I am too lazy, I do not know any web addresses and I do not have time.

Table 7
Favourite web sites

6. My most favourite/frequently used web pages are...	
a) http://www.onestopenglish.com	36
b) http://www.dictionary.com	20
c) http://www.lyrics.com	16
d) http://i-net.cz/eltclub.com	4
e) http://www.classroom.com	6
f) http://www.linguistic-funland.com	1
g) http://www.teenadvice.com	3
h) http://www.tips-tricks.com	2
i) http://headlines.yehoo.com	5
j) other... (see next table)	38
They did not specify although they use the Internet.	18
I do not use the Internet at all.	6

Table 8
Other favourite web sites

Web sites:	Users
http://www.education-world.com	1
http://www.surfnetkids.com	1
http://www.bbc.co.uk	7
http://www.bbc.co.uk/czech	1
http://www.post.cz	1
http://www.aj.cz	8
http://www.eslcafe.com	2
http://www.handoutsonline.com	1
http://www.manythings.org	1
http://www.abcteach.com	1
http://www.ewa.cz	2
http://www.e-academy.cz	1
http://www.tefl.com	1
http://www.longman.com/cuttingedge	1
http://www.britishcouncil.org	1
http://www.iatefl.org	1
http://www.ihworld.com	1
http://www.businessenglishonline.net	1
http://puzzlemaker.com	1
http://www.monsterfacts.com	1
http://www.englishclub.com	2
http://www.enchantedlearning.com/rhymes.html	1
http://www.dapslyrics.com/index.php	1
http://www.longman.com	1
http://www.funschool.com	1
http://www.esl-lounge.com	1
http://www.oup.com	2
http://www.oup.com/elt/cz	1
http://www.thislondon.co.uk	1
many but not specified	2

Table 9

Positively assessed aspects by the participants of the research (arranged in alphabetic order)

Criterion	Positive assessment
Content	additional texts
	all levels
	authentic articles
	business English
	diversity
	entertaining audio
	facts about English speaking countries
	great for kids
	great ideas
	handouts
	illustrative games
	innumerable links
	interesting topics
	lyrics
	non-ELT sites
	on-line tutoring potential
	printable versions
	ready made lessons
	reliable professional content
teachers notes	
tests and quizzes	
wide range of activities	

Criterion	Positive assessment
Currency	newsletters
	regular updates

Criterion	Positive assessment
Design	alphabetic order and clear organisation according to topics
	easy navigation
	great design
	choice of B/W or colour print
	choice of language
	no unnecessary graphics
	quick loading
	simplicity
well set out	

Table 10

Negatively assessed aspects by the participants of the research (arranged in alphabetic order)

Criterion	Negative assessment
Content	few printable activities
	few tests
	insufficient topics for conversation
	levels too challenging
	limited lyrics
	missing links
	little and obscure information
	new activities should be added
	no translations
	not attractive for children
	too complex definitions for students

Criterion	Negative assessment
Currency	content not regularly updated

Criterion	Negative assessment
Design	graphics
	unclear lay out
	confusing home page
	bad navigability
	disorganised topics
	disorganised levels
not very attractive	

Criterion	Negative assessment
Purpose	only for registered users or members

Criterion	Negative assessment
Currency	content not regularly updated

C. Údaje pro knihovnickou databázi

Název práce	Internet jako prostředek rozvoje anglického jazyka
Autor práce	Hana Jelínková
Obor	Učitelství anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby	2005
Vedoucí práce	PhDr. Šárka Ježková, Ph.D.
Anotace	Práce nabízí přehled potenciálně vhodných prostředků a zdrojů dostupných na Internetu, představuje možné způsoby vyhledávání těchto zdrojů a navrhuje možná kritéria jejich hodnocení. Jinými slovy představuje a shrnuje dovednosti, bez jejichž nabytí by bylo jen obtížně možné efektivně využít vše, co může pedagogům pomoci pracovat na profesním rozvoji prostřednictvím Internetu.
Klíčová slova	Internet World Wide Web English teachers Professional development Web-search tools Evaluating criteria