University of Sydney Library Education Internet Guide

(Website review)

Reviewer:
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Site URL:
http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/Guides/Education/

Site title:
University of Sydney Library Education Internet Guide

Objectives of the site:
According to the site’s "scope" page, its objectives are to help users find sources on the Internet related to "education systems, their institutions, policies and programmes, their human and financial resources, and the processes involved in their functioning." It is intended to help those who are beginning Internet research on education-related topics.

Intended audience:
The scope page indicates that the audience for the site is "education administrators, policy makers, and researchers who need to know how to identify descriptive and statistical sources on education systems, their institutions, policies and programmes, their human and financial resources, and the processes involved in their functioning." The guide is heavily geared toward researchers interested in Australian education (not surprising, considering it is a University of Sydney site), but it can also be very useful to those looking for sources of information about education outside of Australia.

Main topics covered:
The guide is basically a lightly annotated "Webliography" of other Web sites related to education. It is divided into six sections:
1. an "In the News" section that links to recent online publications related to education and educational policy;
2. a "Scope" section that briefly explains the purpose and contents of the site;
3. "Using the Internet as a Research Tool," which provides links to general and education-related directories, general and education-related "electronic conferences" (e-mail discussion lists, newsgroups, etc.), guides to using the Internet, and media sites;
4. "Official Information on Education," which links to sites related to the Australian educational system, Departments/Ministries of Education from different parts of the world, international organizations related to education, directories/indices of universities and colleges around the world, and financial aid information;
5. "Selected Areas of Study," arranged alphabetically and divided into A-K and L-Z pages; and
6. "Research," with links to educational research sites, research organizations, information about funding for educational research, journals that publish educational research, bibliographical databases (some only available to University of Sydney staff and students), and conferences.

Usefulness and richness of each topic:
The topics seem quite useful to anyone wishing to do research on education and educational policy.

Extent, appropriateness and quality of external links:
As this is a "Webliography," the vast majority of the content is external links. The "Scope" page notes that "[t]he Guide includes all types of Internet resources (web documents, electronic conferences, electronic databases, etc.), from or about education in Australia, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and Oceania." The "Selected Areas of Study" pages are headed with the statement that "This section includes sites which have been chosen for: their meta-information; the reputation of the compiler; the provision of links to other similar

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sites; and relevance to local curriculum, teaching and research.” The quality of the linked sites seems relatively even—many of the links are to universities or governmental organizations. Other sites linked to include some education-related corporate sites, educational testing organizations like the Princeton Review, and non-profit organizations.

As with any large directory, there are some links that do not work. However, these seem to have been kept to a minimum and the bottom of each page contains the e-mail address of the Guide’s compiler (Christabel Wescombe) so that one can e-mail her with suggestions or comments. I assume one may also e-mail her to recommend a site.

**Interface related aspects:**
The Education Internet Guide is laid out in a relatively straightforward manner, unencumbered by “noisy” images. Most pages load fairly quickly (the two largest files might load a bit more slowly, depending on one’s server or location—A-K is about 76KB and L-Z is about 41KB).

There is no search engine specifically for the Education Internet Guide; in fact, if you click on the “Search” link, you’ll come to a page from which you can search the entire Internet. Perhaps when this guide gets larger, a search engine will be added for it.

Navigation of this site is simple. One thing to remember, however, is that this site is part of the larger University of Sydney Library site—when you click on “home” on the navigation bar at the bottom, it will take you to the U. of Sydney Library home page, as opposed to the Education Internet Guide home page.

**Special remarks:**
As its homepage mentions, this site has been recognized by the Argus Clearinghouse and the InterNIC UniGuide to the Internet, and given the 1997 Web Indexing Prize by the Australian Society of Indexers.

As of this writing (October 2, 1999), it was most recently updated on October 1, 1999.