The desktop internet reference

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The Desktop Internet Reference is one of those clever but simple ideas which will support teachers who use Internet regularly and those helping their peers and students use Internet services. The data file, which contains the reference information is a Windows help file and so creating a Windows icon with Winhelp reading the data file, is simple and users then have a point and click environment to find out about Internet sites, resources, and Internet options. The following extract from the Desktop Internet Reference describes itself.

The Desktop Internet Reference is a hypertext reference to the Internet. Its eighteen thousand pages cover the following topics:
1. What is the Internet? How does it work?
2. How can I get connected to the Internet?
3. What resources are available? How can I find things?
4. How do I use these resources?
5. Where can I find more about these topics?

This reference is based on Peter Scott's Htylet, an excellent DOS and UNIX reference to the Internet. Other documents included are: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Internet NSF's Internet Resource Guide, Zen and the Art of the Internet, Introduction to the Internet: A Reading List, Putting your home PC on the Internet, the Public Dialup Internet Access List, The Totally Unofficial List of Internet Muds, High Weirdness on the Internet, ARCHE user commands, Individual access to the Internet and A List of all known anonymous FTP sites. Each of these documents is included herein its entirety, with all original copyrights retained.

This facility could be provided to students and colleagues (offline) for them to learn about the net or use as a place to find out for themselves the answer to that question: 'How do I find out what is on Internet?' The complete texts of the books listed above is useful when combined with Winhelp's search system. The Glossary and Dictionary of terms, also available through the Winhelp system will help the learner come to grips with terminology and concepts. Information sources ranged from beginner level dialogue to technical descriptions.

This resource would be a valuable addition to your school archives or personal reference collection. It is available in Windows format and a DOS version while a Mac version is under development. The latest version of the Desktop Internet Reference is available via anonymous FTP at various sites worldwide. The FTP site ftp.qut.edu.au always carries the latest version in the directory /pub/mdos/dir.

**GOPHER JEWELS**

Gopher is an information seeking tool that helps people look for resources that have stored in gopher sites around Internet. To the user, Gopher looks like a series of text-based, hierarchical menus. At the ends of gopher tree stems, there might be documents, graphics, software or pointers to other gopher or information seeking tools.

The quality of a gopher can be determined by how easy or difficult it is to locate treasures. Many novice (and expert) gopher users can share their tales about wandering deeper and deeper through gopher trees without ever finding any gems. Gopher Jewels is designed to help people search for information methodically rather than browse aimlessly. It is a very useful starting place for new Internet users to learn about searching for information and a useful starting point for searching for information on a topic when you are uncertain of where to begin.

Gopher Jewels is itself a gopher tree which is organised into subject trees rather than site locations or vague descriptions in 'computer-speak', attributes of menu items in many of the Internet's gopher trees. It has been built cooperatively on the net with advice of many hundreds of contributors who tested the subject tree structure and suggested additional categories and sites to connect to the gopher. It is always undergoing improvements.

Gopher Jewels offers the following information about itself. Gopher Jewels offers a unique approach to gopher subject tree design and content. It is an alternative to the more traditional subject tree design. Although many of the features, individually, are not new the combined set represents the best features found on sites around the world. We offer solutions to navigating information by subject as an experiment in the evolution of information cataloguing. Our focus is on locating information by subject and does not attempt to address the quality of the information we point to.

Gopher Jewels offers the following:
- Over 2,000 pointers to information by category
- Jighead search of all menus in Gopher Jewels
- The option to jump up one menu level from any directory
- The option to jump to the top menu from any directory
- Gopher Tips help documents
- Gopher Jewels list archives
- Gopher Jewels — Talk list archives
- Other gopher related archives
- Help and archives searchable (WAIS)

The subject list is extensive and represents an excellent starting point for many topics. Users can either browse through menu options or use the searching option that exists on almost every menu to get closer to the target archives or specific resource. Teachers will find Gopher Jewels to be an excellent place to begin looking for discipline information, K-12 resources, education-based discussions and professional material as well as pointers to classroom based curriculum projects, lesson plans and curriculum materials. From the site hosting Gopher Jewels, users will be able to access the Ask-ERIC archives and information seeking service discussed by Don Nethercott in this column in the last issue of the Australian Educational Computing.

Gopher Jewels is an excellent place for beginning gopher navigators whose first experiences need to be fruitful searches for quality resources. It represents an efficient way of searching for Internet resources for novice and experienced gopher users.

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