

Book Review

Dave Sperling. Dave Sperling's Internet Guide (Second Edition). Prentice Hall Regents, 1998.

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Dave Sperling's Internet Guide contains a wealth of information on how to use the Internet, how to create your web page, and lists of valuable sites. It is intended for an audience of novice Internet users in the ESL/EFL profession. Basic information and instructions are provided for the user to actively engage in the world of the Internet and explore the possibilities that the Internet offers to assist ESL/EFL professionals. For the person who has a fear or phobia of computers or computer language or is not on the cutting edge, this book is organized and written in a user-friendly style.

There is a rich source of sites for job opportunities throughout the world, chat groups, test preparation (TOEIC, TOEFL), book stores, ESL/EFL programs, cultural themes, dictionaries, conferences, resources, and teaching activities, just to name a few of the many categories. At the end of the book, one can find a number of appendices for country codes, error messages, definitions of Internet 'slang' terminology (netspeak) bibliography, definitions for errors encountered while surfing, as well as a glossary of Internet terms. All of these things make exploring on the Internet easier and more fun.

This book includes a CD-ROM which comprises of a list of ESL/EFL related links, also located in the book. For those people who prefer to read first and do later, this book provides them with step-by-step instructions that they can study before switching on their computer. At the same time it includes numerous interactive tips for readers to try while on their computers which help build the confidence of the user.

Information on 'links' (well over 100 pages) that make surfing for readers much less complicated is given in Dave's book. Some might say these links ruin the fun of surfing and searching on the Web, but we feel this gives the novice user a jump start. Another comment is about the provided links. The author offers a disclaimer about the changing Internet and how not all sites may function forever. Be aware of this possibility in the ever changing world of the Internet.

Likewise the inclusion of HTML code for web page design might be useful for a more advanced Internet user; however, the mention of some of the various software packages that facilitate web page design for 'HTML-illiterate' users is more than enough for the intended audience. HTML code can be very intimidating for novice users.

Another complement to Dave's book is a workbook with tasks for students. These tasks encourage students to interact on the Internet communicating with 'key pals'. Students can search for information on the web related to each unit, learn new vocabulary, as well as participate in writing and group discussions designed to reinforce information viewed during other activities in this workbook. Many of these activities could be an added component to a self-access center.

This book would be useful addition to any TESOL degree program that has a class on educational technology or computer-mediated communication. The language is informal and the book is easy to read. This book would be an appropriate addition to the suggested reading for any student, who is mostly a first-time computer user.

Dave Sperling has made a place for himself in the ESL/EFL profession with the use of the internet. With few other options on the market, this book is much more than the other how-to-do Internet books because of the enormous section of ESL/EFL links and the helpful and insightful tips for the ESL/EFL professional or student. Dave has written this book with a lot of enthusiasm, which encourages readers to experiment with the Internet and shed their fears.

To conclude, we all know how the Internet is part of our lives and for that reason we recommend this book for those with limited experience in this area. Even though it may be a little outdated (1998), it is a tool for the EFL/ESL teacher that is well worth the time and money. It serves as a reference guide to getting started and using the Internet. In our opinion this book would be a great addition to the novice user's library.