→*Fast* Facts

→ Reference Extract

Reference Extract is a targeted Web search engine. It is built from the data of more than 60 "Ask-A" services geared to the education audience. The Department of Education's Virtual Reference Desk team identified high-quality archives of FAQs and previously asked questions. These sites were then indexed, and the result is an easy-to-use search engine. A link on the front page leads to a listing of the sites included in Reference Extract organized by topic.

Reference Extract, ref.syr.edu/. May 13, 2005

→ Internet filtering

Fifty-four percent of American families with teenagers use filters to limit access to online content—a 65 percent increase from the number of those who used filters in 2000. Eighty-one percent of parents of online teens say that teens aren't careful enough when giving out information about themselves online and 79 percent of online teens agree with this. Only five percent of all parents think the Internet is a bad thing for their children.

Amanda Lenhart, "Protecting Teens Online," March 17, 2005. Pew Internet & American Life Project. www.pewinternet.org /report_display.asp?r=152. May 13, 2005

→ Teaching online: a time comparison

A recent case study found that teaching the online version of one sample course required more than twice the amount of time than teaching the same course in-class. "The additional time required by the online format is found to result largely from increased student contact and individualized instruction and not from the use of technology per se." In the 2000–01 school year, 90 percent of public institutions offered online courses.

Joseph Cavanaugh, "Teaching Online—A Time Comparison," Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, Spring 2005, Volume 8, Number 1, www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/ojdla/spring81/cavanaugh81.htm. May 13, 2005

→ Gadget mania in academia

Last year, Duke University handed out iPods to all incoming freshmen, citing "educational purposes." Several other schools, including Drexel, San Diego State University, and the University of California-San Diego, have experimented with similar gadgets, including wireless personal digital assistants. Other devices under consideration include tablet computers, digital video cameras, and video players. Duke spent $500,000 this year on the iPods.

Jonathan Sidener, "Schools experiment with tech toys as educational tools," SignOnSanDiego.com, May 9, 2005. www. signonsandiego.com/news/computing/personaltech/20050509-9999-mz1b9gadget.html. May 16, 2005

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