Uses of the internet

INTRODUCTION

For our current generation, the internet has nearly become a necessity with all of the luxuries it provides. Just about anyone can find at least one use for the internet. But what makes the internet so useful to us? Some people can hardly live without it! The following report will discuss the internet's many uses: Communication, File Sharing, and Media.

COMMUNICATION

The internet is used primarily for communication; people of all ages take advantage of this. What makes internet communication so useful is it's speed, and most of it is free. Internet communication varies, there are different methods and different ways to take advantage of your three senses; touch, sight, and hearing.

ELECTRONIC MAIL.

Electronic Mail, also known as e-mail, is similar to real mail, but instead of writing on stationary and sending them in envelopes, you can type up whatever message you want to send, and it will be sent immediately. You can also send e-mails on portable devices such as a phone, making emailing increasingly popular. Because of this, the post offices may struggle, however people still mail physical objects. However, you can attach files, such as your favorite music, pictures, text documents and more. But be careful when opening messages sent from an unknown user, viruses can also be attached to emails.

INSTANT MESSAGING.

Instant Messaging (IM) is very similar to e-mailing, and often may be confused for one another. Instead of sending a message and waiting for a

reply, IMing is " real-time," and you must log on to a Messenger to message other users who you have added to your buddy list. This is almost like chatting, except with typing, since you can immediately send and receive messages without waiting. Instant messaging can also be done on most mobile devices, and offers live webcam or calling on the computer. This is a free alternative to using a telephone, but requires a microphone for your computer. Files can also be transferred through IMing, just like e-mailing, you can also open up picture sharing in order to share pictures saved on your computer. Usually you don't have to worry about viruses if you add people to your messenger that you trust.

There are 3 primary Messenger services, they are:

• AIM

• MSN Messenger

• Yahoo Messenger

INTERNET FORUMS.

Internet Forums or message boards are online discussion sites where a user signs up for an account and posts messages, usually concerning the theme of the forum. Internet Forums are good ways to meet new people via the internet, sometimes they may be all the way on the other side of the world! Forums are usually divided into different sections, which divide into different topics, which divide into different subtopics, which contain different threads concerning the theme of the subtopics. Here, people can post replies with their opinions on the threads. The creator of the forum will assign positions to the members of the forum, in most cases they come in these categories:

1. Administrator

2. Global Moderator

3. Section Moderator

Moderators are the ones who enforce the rules of the forum and have the ability to ban members or take away privileges (global moderators having access to the whole forum, section moderators being limited to a section), and administrators who have power over the moderators. Administrators can sometimes even change the forum the same way the creator can, or assign moderator positions. There are also a few more privileges assigned to members by the founder:

• Graphic Artist

• Affiliate

• Members who contribute to the forum in some way

• Members who have access to restricted areas

Anyone in the world has access to what you write on forums if they're open to the public, so be careful about what you say. If you make negative comments for bad reasons, people may respond in a negative way as well.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

The internet is also commonly used to obtain information or used for research. With it's speed and relevancy, most people would prefer to use the internet for research rather than doing it the old fashioned way by using books. Also, some information may not be recorded in books, or may not be easily found in books, so the internet would also be the better alternative. Some schools even require students to use computers for schoolwork and homework, which is also why some schools provide computer labs and

computer classes to help students become more computer savvy in order to do this work.

ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIAS.

Online encyclopedias are like regular encyclopedias, except information can be immediately found by typing in the key words to what you are looking for. Like normal encyclopedias, online encyclopedias contain many articles on many topics. Online enclyclopedias are constantly growing and being updated, due to more information being generated every day. Two popular forms of online encyclopedias are:

• Wikipedia

• Other Wikias

WIKIPEDIA.

Wikipedia is probably one of the most popular online encyclopedias. People viewing articles can sometimes make edits to the articles, or even add new articles. Sometimes articles require more information or cleaning up, and anyone can edit Wikipedia. This comes to the problem that the information on Wikipedia isn't always accurate, so most teachers at schools don't encourage students to use it for research. However, it can be used for research when researching a generic idea.

OTHER WIKIAS.

Wikias are free webhosting for wikis, where anyone can create their own wiki based on a specific topic, narrowing down the information in the articles. Wikias can be based on long-running TV series, Video games, Companies, anything that contains a large amount of imformation that can be well organized.

ONLINE DICTIONARIES.

Online dictionaries are like normal dictionaries, and a useful tool for students. Instead of having to flip through several pages of a dictionary to find the definition of a word, all you have to do is type in a word and it will immediately tell you it's definition. There are also online thesauruses, Spanish-to-English and vice versa dictionaries, and much, much more.

WEB SEARCH ENGINES.

Search engines are tools designed to search for information on the web. There is usually a search bar for you to key in what you're looking for, then a page with a list of anything relevant to your search will pop up. You can narrow down your searches to images, files, websites, and more by using advanced search options. Searching on a search engine may even take you to an online dictionary or encyclopedia! Search engines will take you anywhere on the internet, and have the largest variety for finding information. There are many search engine sites, but some websites have a search bar in them that will take you to a search engine. A few popular search engines are:

- Google
- Yahoo Search
- MSN Search
- Bing. com (newest this year)

MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia is different from traditional hand-produced media, and is usually accessed via a computer device. " The term is used in contrast to media which only uses traditional forms of printed or hand-produced material.

Multimedia includes a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, and interactivity content forms." (Wikipedia.) Multimedia can be a useful way to display information or instructions, but can also be used for entertainment purposes. Although multimedia can be purchased or found on things such as disks in stores, it can also be obtained through the internet, which would be more preferable.

HOSTING.

Hosting is where you can upload multimedia and then have someone else download it to their computer. Basically, you submit a file (or multiple files) to host's server, and is then hosted on the server where anyone on the web can download it for their own. Your file may even appear on a search engine if someone is looking for it. These are the different kinds of hosting:

- Image hosting
- Video Hosting
- File Hosting

Most of the time, content will be removed from the hosting if it is too explicit or offensive. However, there are even some sites that are limited only to explicit or adult material.

WEBCAMS.

Webcams allow people to use live video. Two primary uses for webcams would be:

- Video Chatroom
- Video Chat Conference (messengers)

Webcams can mainly be used in messengers, but are also used in online video chatrooms, which is also similar to chat conferences. There will be a window where several users can talk by typing text simultaneously, and one or more of those users will be visible through a webcam. These chatrooms are sometimes open to the public at all times, some require a password, and some require an invite, where chat conferences usually always require a invite (unless you make the room yourself.)

WEBCASTS.

Webcasting is pretty much broadcasting media over the internet. Webcasting involves streaming media technology, so the webcast will be broadcasted from one content source so that several people can listen and/or view the webcast simultaneously. Webcasts can involve video and audio, where podcasts only include audio, making them very similar to radios. Webcasts and Podcasts can also be downloaded, or viewed on video hosting websites. Obviously, these aren't live broadcasts.

FILE SHARING.

File sharing is similar, in a way, to file hosting and transfering files on messengers. Originally, the only way to share files was with removable media (such as flashdrives, floppy disks etc.) But now there is a much more convenient way to download several files of any kind at once. This is how file sharing works; first you must download a program that allows you to have access to P2P (peer to peer) networking. When you download the program, it usually lets you browse through media shared by other users on their computers, and lets you download it. You can share any kind of files this way, making it a popular and convenient way to download.

CONCLUSION

The internet is one of the most useful tools we could have ever imagined. Even with all the things mentioned in this report, there are still other various uses, but this report did cover the basics that can be broken down into these specific things. Our society will probably never outgrow the internet; we will continue to find ways to advance it. Hopefully if you don't use the internet, or take it for granted, you'll now be able to see it's significance.