

A Book Review of Dave Sperling's Internet Guide, Second Edition

Reviewed by L. M. Dryden

dryden@gol.com

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Nisshin, Japan

Many teachers know Dave Sperling as the creator of Dave's ESL Cafe, (<http://www.eslcafe.com>). With his second edition of The Internet Guide, Sperling offers a cornucopia of information for English language teachers and learners who want to make the most of the Net.

In a friendly tone that avoids technotalk, Sperling provides helpful advice for both beginners and advanced users. The heart of the book, "Dave's Guide to the Best of the Web," contains hundreds of URLs, all briefly annotated and organized in over fifty categories.

Students will find websites to visit for dictionaries and encyclopedias; distance learning and financial aid; lessons in grammar and idioms, listening and speaking; newspapers from around the world; phonics and pronunciation; quizzes, slang, and tongue-twisters; TOEIC and TOEFL; student Internet projects; and vocabulary and writing.

Teachers and researchers will also find links to articles, professional associations, and journals; bookstores and publishers; conferences and CALL; holidays and games; business English, linguistics, literacy, and literature; movies and screenplays; meeting other teachers, school directories, and teacher training.

The Best of the Web

"Dave's Guide to the Best of the Web" offers virtually something for everyone looking for self-paced learning activities, on-line teaching materials, and information for professional growth. Readers already familiar with the first edition will find that the second edition includes some new categories, among them immigration, kids, music, television, and travel. The overall scope of this chapter and the entire book is truly international with references to EFL sites throughout the world.

CD-ROM

A new and welcome feature of the second edition is a CD-ROM which works on both the Macintosh and the Windows platforms and which contains links to all the sites listed in "Dave's Guide to the Best of the Web." Simply connect to the Internet through your provider, navigate through the index on the disc, click on the links provided in each category, and find yourself instantly transported to any of the hundreds of sites listed in "The Best of the Web."

Other Chapters

Other chapters give specialized information. "Jobs on the Net" lists sites throughout the world for those who want to teach EFL / ESL outside the US. In the second edition, these sites have been reorganized by continent (Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe) as well as by region (the Middle East and Latin America) and by particular country (Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, and New Zealand). There are a dozen sites for Japan alone, and hundreds more for other countries. In addition, many sites deal with such matters as job interviews, resumes, summer positions, and volunteer work.

For Beginners

For beginners, Sperling covers Net basics: how to get connected; how to work with search engines, directories, and on-line libraries; and how to find people and locate software for general use and for language learning. Sperling also tells how language students and teachers can use e-mail and mailing lists, as well as such exotic Net features such as USENET news, Web discussion boards, Chat, MOOs, and audio and videoconferencing in the classroom. In addition, Sperling provides a helpful section on netiquette and a short tutorial on creating a basic web page that includes the fundamentals of HTML and how to obtain and use HTML editors.

These chapters are especially valuable for their clear and concise explanations for beginners, their many well-chosen URLs, their frequent tips that even advanced users can learn from, and their overall emphasis on the ways that these resources serve English language teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Sperling concludes with a short chapter dealing with frequently-asked questions and sites regarding copyright law; appendices for country codes, error messages, netspeak, slang, smileys, and other conventions; and a well-selected bibliography of books on every major Internet category dealt with in this volume, followed by a helpful glossary of Internet terms.

One drawback, inevitable in a printed format and even on a CD-ROM, is that a few URLs are already off-line. These will certainly be corrected in future editions.

As the first edition promised, The Internet Guide will become "your constant travel companion as you navigate the World Wide Web." The second edition meets even greater expectations: "Whether you're a newbie, or a Net vet, . . . you'll learn how to talk with other language teachers and ESL/EFL students from around the world, gather class material, read the latest journal articles, access language learning software, and even find a teaching job!" For the journey ahead, teachers and students of English are lucky to have this friendly and reliable guide to the rapidly expanding on-line universe. Bon voyage!

Sperling, Dave. Dave Sperling's Internet Guide. (Second Edition.)
Upper Saddle River, NJ: [Prentice Hall Regents](#). 1998. Pp. iii + 183. ISBN 0-13-918053-2.