

Filamentality Fact Sheet

What in the World Wide Web is Filamentality?

Filamentality is a fill-in-the-blank interactive web site that guides you through picking a topic, searching the web, gathering good Internet sites, and turning web resources into activities appropriate for learners. It helps you combine the **Filaments** of the web with a learner's **mentality** (get it?). "Filamentality" helps you spin pieces of the web into your own learning activities.

Support is built in, so you'll be guided along the way and end up with a web-based activity you can share with others even if you don't know anything about HTML, web servers, or all that www-dot stuff. Filamentality is ready, willing and able to make five different kinds of web-based learning pages depending upon the goal you have for users of your web page.

Who's supposed to use Filamentality? You! That's who's supposed to use Filamentality. If you are a teacher, student, media specialist / librarian, trainer for schools, etc. Filamentality has tips and help pages to hold your hand through the process. You can even use Filamentality if you're a newcomer to the web.

How do I start?

Learning should be more effective and efficient than wandering around aimlessly and getting happy when any learning just happens to take place. One place to start is to look at a subject of particular interest. For students this might be a hobby, a certain subject they've heard about or something they've always wanted to learn about. For teachers and librarians, it might be a subject that they specialize in. Another idea for both teachers and students is to look to the curriculum units already set-up and look for the missing pieces.

How will you choose which activity format to use? Let's start with the goal you're carrying around in your head or heart. The chart below represents the different goals and kinds of web activities Filamentality can build for you.

Assemble Resources

Some of the things that make the World Wide Web so useful for learning are the freshness of current events information, the passion of many special interest causes, and the diversity of perspectives available on many opinions. Add to this the ability to communicate with people across the world, access to a wealth of multimedia resources, and increasingly interactive learning experiences and we've got a bunch of good reasons to add web resources to the current learning environment.

- **Hotlist:** The first step in using the power of the Internet for learning is linking to the sites that you find most useful. Doing this will save your learners hours of aimless searching (not an efficient use of class time). Example - **China on the Net** (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/hotlist.html>)
- **Scrapbook:** If learners already have a general understanding of the subject (i.e., they've done some preliminary learning in class or with traditional resources), you might want their first web-based activity to be the exploration of a Multimedia Scrapbook. This format allows learners to dig through a collection of Internet sites organized around specific categories such as, photographs, maps, stories, facts, quotations, sound clips, videos, virtual reality tours, etc. Learners use the Scrapbook to find aspects of the broader topic that they feel are important. They download or copy and paste these scraps into a variety of formats: newsletter, desktop slide presentation, collage, bulletin board, Hyper Studio stack, or web page. By allowing students to "find themselves" in their interests (sparked by the web resources they encounter), the Multimedia Scrapbook offers a more open, student-centered approach. Example - **Dinosaur Hunter's Scrapbook** (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/scrapdinosaurjo.html>)

Promote Learning

Let's say that you want to create a totally web-based activity. You might as well, after all, you'll create handouts, do research, and design the activities, so why not put this on the web, too? Your students can access it from any connected computer and other teachers at your grade level across the world could have access to your learning experience. Filamentality thinks it's a good idea to integrate the Internet into your activities anyway, rather than sending students "out there" to find something. Isn't it better to provide compelling experiences that foster the attitudes, knowledge and skills that are the goals you're all working toward?

- **Treasure Hunt:** To develop solid knowledge on a subject, you can create Treasure Hunts. The basic strategy is to find web pages that hold information (text, graphic, sound, video, etc.) that you feel is essential to understanding the topic. After you've gathered these links, you are then prompted by Filamentality to pose one key question for each web resource you've linked to. A smartly designed Treasure Hunt can go far beyond finding unrelated nuggets of knowledge. By choosing questions that define the scope or parameters of the topic, students discover the answers and tap into a deeper vein of thought--one that now stakes out the dimensions or schema of the domain being studied. Example - 1) **Dip, Chew, It's Still Not For You** (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/huntchewingch.html>). 2) **Black History Past to Present** (http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/bh_hunt_quiz.html)
- **Subject Sampler:** Part of what makes the Internet so great is the quirky, passionate, real stuff that many people and organizations post there. You'll find things on the web that you'd never find on TV, newspapers, or magazines. Subject Samplers tap into this vibrant vein in order to connect students to the chosen topic. Subject Sampler present learners with a smaller number of intriguing web sites organized around a main topic. What makes this a particularly effective way to engage student buy-in is that first off, you've chosen web sites that offer something interesting to do, read, or see. Second, students are asked to respond to the web-based activities from a personal perspective. Example - **Exploring Chinese Culture** (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/sampler.html>)
- **WebQuest:** When it's time to go beyond learning facts and get into grayer, more challenging aspects of the topic, your students are ready to try a WebQuest. Basically, a WebQuest presents students with a challenging task, scenario, or problem to solve. It's best to choose aspects of a topic that are under dispute or that offer a couple different perspectives. Logistically, all students begin by learning some common background knowledge, then they divide into groups. In the groups each student or pair of students have a particular role, task, or perspective to master. They effectively become experts on one aspect of a topic. When the roles come together, students must synthesize their learning by completing a summarizing act such as e-mailing congressional representatives or presenting their interpretation to real world experts on the topic. Example - **Look Who's Paying the Bill!** (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/democracy/debtquest.html>)

