

# Eleven Categories of Educational Websites

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**1. Instructional:** must have at least one intended learning goal or outcome and it must have learning activities that elicit a performance. It must include some form of assessment component that allows the learner to create a product, receive feedback, or reflect on the attempt to accomplish the goal(s). These instructional elements may be explicitly stated and demonstrated or they may be embedded within a resource's content.

**2. Learning Activities:** intended for learners (as opposed to teachers or parents) and feature learning activities and/or educational games to be downloaded or completed online. These activities may be incorporated into the classroom, lab, or distance learning curricula, but such resources do not exhibit the components of Instructional resources.

**3. Content Collection:** a compilation of information about a specific content area (such as genetics, coaching basketball, or the works of Shakespeare). Such resources often include informative readings, illustrations and other rich content. They are not classified as Instructional because they do not include intended learning goals or assessment, nor are they Learning Activities, as they do not include active learner participation. While Content Collections may feature a few external hyperlinks, by this classification system they should consist primarily of within-site content.

**4. List of Links:** features organized external links to resources about a topic or theme. The resource should serve principally as an index for external content and should contain little or no original content of its own. If a resource's links are mostly internal (that is, most of the actual content is located within the resource itself), it should be classified as a Content Collection or RAND (see below), depending on its other characteristics.

**5. Reference/Archive/News/Database:** reference tools (such as an encyclopedia, dictionary, or atlas), archives of content with potential educational value, news, and databases that might prove useful to teachers or learners. These resources may be indexed chronologically, alphabetically, or topically. RAND resources are designed as information and reference tools. Web-based news agencies, encyclopedias, reference books, and question-answer services are in this category. RAND resources differ from Content Collections and Lists of Links in that they are broader and may address multiple topics and are oriented toward searching for information, rather than examining collected information related a single specific topic.

**6. Teacher and Parent Resources:** designed to provide instructors or parents with lesson plans, instructor guides, or home-schooling materials. These materials may be displayed online, or available as downloadable files.

While such resources may also include subject matter links and learner activities, the main focus is assisting teachers or parents, and this is usually reflected in the language used within the resource. Such resources often address teachers directly with phrases such as "your students" and "your classes."

**7. Shared Experiences:** provides learners with opportunities to take part online in ongoing educational or research activities and expeditions, including virtual field trips. Resources representing projects in which participants actually gather data and can post it to a central database are also included in this category. (These are sometimes called collaborative Web-based experiments.) These attempt to give the learner a sense of participation in activities not typically available in the classroom.

**8. Personal Expression and Interpersonal Interaction (PEII):** designed to facilitate discussion, interaction, and other types of information sharing. A PEII resource differs from a Shared Experiences resource in that the former exists to encourage personal connection and interaction among students, while the latter emphasizes educational content in the form of research projects or virtual field trips.

**9. Informal Education:** represent actual places such as zoos, museums, historic sites, gardens, aquaria, and parks that have an educational component. This category also includes real-world or virtual exhibits. Often include content such as visitor information, schedules, exhibit information, maps and directions, membership and funding information, and special events. May offer an education section with learning materials and activities for teachers and students.

**10. Research and Service Organizations and Projects (RSOP):** represents a particular research, academic, or service organization. Also included are short-term and long-term research, service, or curricular projects designed to aid educational endeavors. Typically addresses the nature and purpose of an organization, current and past projects, recent results, news and events, and related educational materials and activities.

**11. Commercial:** primarily intended to promote and sell products or services. Often include additional components designed to inform, educate, or entertain, and may be quite rich in terms of educational content. For example, a company selling diabetes medication might include information or instruction about the causes and treatments of diabetes.