

REAL-TIME DISCUSSIONS OVER THE INTERNET

TUTORIAL PRESENTATION

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During the past few years many colleges have networked offices, laboratories and/or classrooms to provide Internet access. The faculty is now faced with the ever changing challenge of defining Information Literacy and incorporating it into their curriculum. Our definitions probably include how to search for and download information on the world wide web and communication using E-mail. The growth of the Internet and the need for continuing education by the adult/working population has resulted in a review teaching/learning models. There is a need for the development and implementation of cooperative or collaborative learning models that provide the maximum flexibility for students.

Some products are emerging to provide distributed learning environments; the latest being Learning Space from LOTUS/IBM. Many Internet providers, such as Microsoft Network, provide the opportunity to create chats groups within there closed, proprietary system. There are also options/opportunities currently on the Internet that are free and provide greater flexibility to the users.

This tutorial will discuss Internet Relay Chat (IRC, a.k.a. CHAT) and identify the available programs that are independent of Internet providers such as MIRC, NSCAT, ICHAT and PIRCH for the PC environment and IRCLE, GLOBAL CHAT and HOMER for the MacIntosh. We will demonstrate how to download, install and configure them on individual machines. We will discuss how we have used CHAT in courses and how they can be used as part of a distance learning program. Lessons learned, positive and negative, from our experiences will also be discussed. Members of the session will be encouraged to share their experiences with these programs.