

Medianet homepage with link to Web site circled.

It's exactly because weeding is such a part of daily routine in the Educational Media Library that the resources containing information about Pluto as a planet proved to be such a conundrum. These videos weren't old or boring; they had just one fact wrong. One fact wrong can be serious in a program about sexually transmitted diseases, but can it really matter if Pluto is a dwarf planet or a planet? We decided it did. And so our project began.

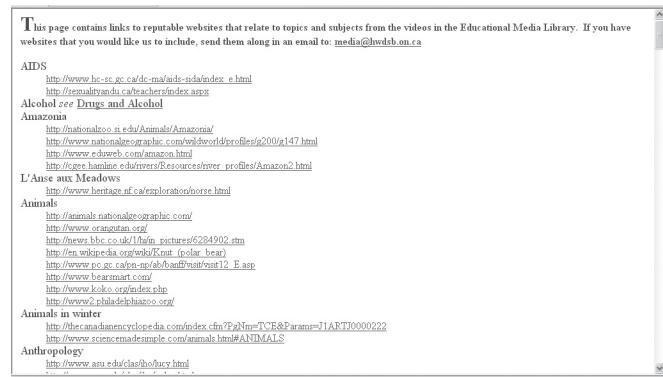
It took about five minutes to realize that if a Web link would be helpful for the Pluto problem, it would also be helpful for other topics that tend to change with new information. These could include topics like nutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, bicycle safety, climate change, endangered species, genetics, and even the pyramids (slaves didn't build them after all.)

The video collection was divided into manageable chunks beginning with the oldest items. These records were flagged for later Internet searching.

Medianet can accommodate one hyperlink per catalogue record. The link displays in pink in the illustration below. A sentence was also added to the synopsis to direct teachers' attention to the hyperlink.

After sorting out the mechanics of getting the hyperlinks into the Medianet catalogue records, we got down to the business of finding appropriate Web sites. To aid in the search we developed the following criteria,

- ◆ Suitable for education
- ◆ Reputable sites
- ◆ Interesting, interactive sites with lots of links
- ◆ Direct access to the topic (not necessarily the homepage)
- ◆ Canadian if possible



New Web page of topic links on HWDSB's Medianet.

Over the course of the project, a number of search engines were used. The favourites were Google.ca and exalead.com.

As the work progressed we came to realize that we were building up a sizable collection of useful topic- and curriculum-related Web sites. These we began adding by topic, to a new Web page on Medianet. We placed a link to this new page of Web sites on the Medianet homepage.

The project continues. At this writing, we are two-thirds of the way through our video collection. We've incorporated the Web links into our regular Medianet marketing program. The feedback is starting to come in and it's positive.

Dealing with older collections and shrinking budgets is a fact of life in most libraries today. Our Web link project is one way to breathe some new life into those borderline resources that are just too good to weed but too dated to circulate with confidence.

