Internet site – linked to history

It is not only appealing for pupils to present the results of their work on an Internet site: This final product of a search for historical evidence also provides an exciting network of text and multimedia components for those who access it. It invites the observer to participate interactively: The pages can be "surfed" in a predetermined or open-ended process. In addition, the results of the research can be viewed by a broad public via the World Wide Web.

However, all aspects of creating a website are quite challenging, from determining and organising the contents to the technological realization. The process has to be well thought out and planned; technical knowledge of HTML editor programs (for example, Frontpage or Netscape Composer) must be available or acquired; and the technical resources (computer, scanner, printer, digital camera) must be on hand and accessible.

Designing the Internet site

- Arrange your results (determine main themes and secondary themes; the number of main themes should determine the number of Internet pages you need).

- Choose illustrations to be scanned: photos, maps, newspaper articles, letters and other documents (potentially even including sound documents, video excerpts and so on). Don't forget to name the sources of illustrations, too.

- Establish a layout: position and size of the main texts and secondary texts, paragraphs, headlines, combinations of text and photo. Choice of background, of colours for the background and text, as well as the typeface and its size.

- Compose main texts for the Internet pages and texts for the secondary themes, and don't forget descriptions of images and documents. Remember: Sources must also be cited on the Internet!

- Develop the content linkages between the Internet pages. Establish the navigation and structure of hyperlinks (internal links within the pages and external links to pages outside your site). Pay special attention to the consistency, lucidity and clarity of the navigation. A "flowchart," or a hand-sketched overview, can be helpful in planning how to connect the web pages.

**Designing
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Technical operation

- Check that all links function, and check the correlation of images, sound and video elements.
- Check how the page looks in different browsers (the same pages can look different, without your having intended it).
- Set up a system for uploading your material onto an internal (school-based) or external server.
- Don't forget to save your pages on a CD-ROM.

Worth considering

- A clear structure – or "thread" – for the website is important for the viewer: Navigation should be self-evident, wherever the viewer is on the site, and should make it possible for him or her to arrive at the desired location or at the home page with the fewest possible clicks.
- Hyperlinks can interrupt the flow of a text, because they prompt the reader to click: Too many hyperlinks turn out to be problematic, because the viewer won't retain much content and will simply "click through" – making all your work useless!
- Particularly in the Internet, reading long texts is tiring. So it is important to reduce them to the most important elements. Set aside enough time for both the technological work and the editorial tasks.
- All copyright questions, particularly concerning images and other documents, must be answered before your work is published!