

The armchair activist – using the internet for biodiversity.

Note from the author:

This workshop was conducted on the 26th of June, 2010 at the Daylesford Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre by Wombat Forestcare members. At the time of the workshop all the links were valid however as time goes on that may change.

When putting together this talk there were two issues that I had to grapple with.

1. Staying on topic
2. Stopping participants from getting lost in cyberspace

Staying on topic

This was hard as so many organisations are doing so much that it was like a constant siren's song to focus on what is being done and not on how the internet is playing a vital role in this work. This is because at the end of the day, the net is just a bunch of computers and wires, however without the net, this work may not get done.

Getting lost in cyberspace

This was the other great challenge of a topic like this. There is so much out there that people's brains are liable to explode with an information overload. To try to keep this to a minimum I have used several techniques. First, I have chopped the topic up into small, easy to grasp headings. I have tried not to use more than three examples without putting in a subheading.

To assist the learner to leave one topic and move to the next I have included a piece of imagery. This is a deliberate attempt to engage the imaginative side of the brain and to make the learner stop thinking about the last topic. By throwing in smells or colours, the learner's brain will automatically engage other senses, interrupting the logic circuits for just long enough to help them to disengage from the last topic. When you are reading through the notes instead of listening to the spoken word, you may not be able to do this. However I just wanted to explain why I have left them in there.

For definitions see the Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.com/>)

For online tutorials on how to use the web, refine your search etc use the BBC's Webwise (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise>)

Using the internet for biodiversity

The internet allows people to have an uninterrupted, uncensored and multifaceted experience of the world. These experiences come from individuals, organisations, commercial entities and government agencies. The information flow on the internet is not decided by mainstream media agendas.

- Allows equity of access
- Cheap and fast
- Allows for 2 way communication
- Anyone can become a publishing house with a world wide audience

There are many ways the internet is being used to help the environment. I am going to cover:

- Research
- Education
- Community building
- Direct action
- Conservation
- Contributing

Although I'm using specific sites as examples of one type of category, many of them fit multiple categories.

The Net is a big place and can feel overwhelming.

Focus on what subject interests you then find a program or entity that you like best to get involved with it.