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## *Virtual versus Real Field activities*

*The debate about physical exercise and adolescent development continues. Students think they get adequate exercise and some parents and teachers think that they don't get enough. The invention of virtual field trips and PowerPoint displays of locations may seem a little like a half baked idea. In reality it is opening a door to a world students may not have seen or see with a new perspective. What happens when these photos are taken from the local area? Whilst technology has its merits of delivering the instant image or sound byte, for field trips there is nothing like the real thing. My arrival at school with scratches up my leg from some weekend landscape photography provided some light-hearted conversation between myself and students. It is through example we need to inspire, to motivate students to get out and experience the world around them. These sites are offered as an inspiration to the global classroom we live in.*

**Rock Landforms of Australia and New Zealand on the Web** - Villanova College, Brisbane  
<http://www.vnc.qld.edu.au/enviro/landform/index.htm>

This Queensland based site is the work of Col Grant, one of the RGSQ/GTAQ members. The collected information has a wide range of images from throughout Australia and is comprehensive in its presentation. The presentation was completed in 2000, and was associated with the Flinders circumnavigation of Australia. The images give a wide range of choice of the three rock types and tectonic landforms across both countries. Although a little eastern states biased, the exercises and field sketching images (completed in MS paint) are a simple but effective tool to engage students into some geomorphology. If internet connections are a problem, the site can also be bought on CD-ROM for \$45.

**Geology of the South Central Coast of England**  
<http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/Field-Guides-Introduction.htm>

Even though this is a geology based site, Dr Ian West from the University of Southampton does provide a rich resource for senior level coastal studies. Ample text accompany a rich range of images including historical maps and photographs. As the South Coast is a World Heritage Listed area, the field studies retain a significance for Geography Studies teachers and those interested in a heritage unit for senior middle school studies. This site is well worth bookmarking.

**Downtown Los Angeles Walking Tour** - Department of Geography - The University of Southern California  
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/geography/losangeles/lawalk/index.html>

The sprawling metropolis of Los Angeles is worth studying for its diversity of cultures and urban form. The html and .gif image layout make it easy to navigate but the images (one or two per location) give only some perspective on what life is like in these areas. This is appropriate for any secondary class but worksheets would be needed to guide students through the many, many pages available.

**GeoFlight Australia**  
<http://www.geoflight.com.au>

After the successful free demonstration at TSOF, the Geoflight website is worth further investigation. This could be for experienced users or first-timers to find out what Geoflight is all about. Whilst the resolution is a bit patchy (expected on a web connection rather than the software package), it gives a good free look at some of the major cities and locations around the world. A download of the Skyline "Terra Explorer" software is needed to view the programs; this is an easy step by step method included as part of the site structure on the international fly-through page. Unfortunately, a live internet connection is always needed to view the demonstration, so it could be costly for individual student use. The various flyovers ( eg: Rottneest Island, Sydney, Atlanta, Los Angeles, London, Paris) show a good variety of landscapes and would be a great demonstration tool for an urban studies topic.

**National Geographic Map Machine**  
<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/>

For those teachers who haven't moved over to GIS technologies, the Map Machine site is a good source of black line master style outlines of country based and world maps. Even for those who have made the switch, this site may be useful for primary based teachers or secondary students wanting to source an original map/outline for classroom presentations. Whilst not on the trail directly, the wider National Geographic site does give a wide variety of information on different areas and field trips. The National Geographic site is an oldie but a goodie...

**Virtual Field trips of Hawaii** - University of Hawaii  
<http://satftp.soest.hawaii.edu/space/hawaii/virtual.field.trips.html>

This image rich site has both aerial photographs and ground based images to look at geomorphological and human aspects of the Hawaiian Islands. Each of the main islands are covers and show a wide range of images (12 or more for each island). The information would be suitable for a geomorphic hazards unit, remote sensing or tourism.

See GTASA's International Year of Rice links at [http://www.gtasa.asn.au/resources/internat\\_year/rice/rice\\_links.htm](http://www.gtasa.asn.au/resources/internat_year/rice/rice_links.htm)

**Natural Resources Canada Teacher and Student Page and the National Atlas of Canada**

[http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/kids/geography\\_e.html](http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/kids/geography_e.html)  
<http://atlas.gc.ca/site/english/index.html>

These sites give an opportunity to study a country rich in natural resources and technological expertise that isn't the USA. This Natural Resources Geography page gives links explanations of various emerging technology in cartography as well as games and other natural science links. The photo album is a good resource for country or ecosystem studies. For those who wish to explore a little more, the Canadian version of our own SA Online Atlas (<http://www.atlas.sa.gov.au/>) is a great resource. Be warned though, as it will need more than a 56k modem speed to adequately deal with the amount of data offered.

**Glacier National Park Electronic Field Trip** Montana State Education Department

<http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/glaciereft/default.htm>

This change over time site looks over national parks issues using their own natural resources as an example. The virtual field trips cover fire hazards, glacial retreat with photo point images and other features connected with glaciers. The site also gives audio support and Real Audio Media software is needed to hear the explanations. The Year 2000 information is the only current information posted; the homepage gives relevant support links to follow up on some of these issues.

**Scenic Idaho**

<http://www.scenic-idaho.com>

The topic of wilderness or stereotypes could be well be utilised for students visiting this site. As the homepage describes "The Undiscovered West! Wander through Scenic Idaho and discover a state that IS what America WAS!" The classic images could be used with primary or secondary classes to look at topics such as ecology, national parks, global warming, agriculture in Geography courses or stereotypes, culture, recreation and other such topics in social or Australian Studies type topics. Primary based teachers may want to use Buck the Labrador adventures to explore the mid-west and look at a journey of their own for the primary classroom.

There are other sites which claim to have virtual field trip resources:

<http://www.field-guides.com>, <http://www.field-trips.org> and <http://www.geog.le.ac.uk/cti/virt.html> or similar, but these are often scant or projects often in their infancy. Those who are interested in primary field trips may want to visit Barbara Braxton's efforts at Palmerston Primary School (<http://www.palmdps.act.edu.au/>). These resources may inspire others in the South Australian education community to offer their own virtual trips on their own school sites. Information Technology embedded into geography is one way to enthuse students to research their own natural and/or built environments.

Alex Robertson

**Saving time with EdNA Online, Kerrie Smith**

**Theme Pages**

<http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/page456.html>

Whether you are looking for resources for the International Year of Rice, the Australian Year of the Built Environment, the River Murray, Australia's Endangered Species, or Energy Consumption, then the EdNA Online theme pages will connect to you quality internet sites relevant to the Australian curriculum.

The Geography theme page at <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/page1424.html> is a good starting point and lists national and international events relevant to geography teachers, as well as useful categories on EdNA Online and links to careers that geography students may be interested in.

**Searching EdNA**

<http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/search>

A simple search of EdNA for GIS or any other topic will put you in touch with a wealth of resources. Choose the Advanced Search and add GEM (Gateway to Educational Materials - USA) to your search and broaden your results with lesson plans and classroom activities.

**Newsletters**

EdNA newsletters are another way to keep up to date and find out about new websites. The EdNA-for-schools newsletter is produced fortnightly and is available on the website at <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/page330.html>. The newsletter is also available as a plain text email. See the form at the bottom of the webpage to subscribe.

**Free EdNA Online Workshops in June at Technology School of the Future**

Each year EdNA Online gets funding to conduct workshops relating to EdNA tools and Services. The initial group of SA workshops is being held on June 21<sup>st</sup>:

- WORKSHOP A: An Update of EdNA Online's Tools and Services
- WORKSHOP B: Embedding services and resources from EdNA Online into your own website

S46	Workshop A	9-10.30
S47	Workshop B	11-12.30
S48	Workshop A	3.30-5
S49	Workshop B	5.30-7

Bookings form is at <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/page2765.html>