

MEDT 6401  
Website Evaluation  
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## Overview

I chose to look at the Brain Pop website. My school recently bought a subscription, and since I don't know of many websites for children, I thought Brain Pop would be a good start. After taking a look at the Computer/Internet section, I actually think this would be a good educational resource for my non-tech savvy teachers, particularly the section on computer viruses.

We recently had a small virus outbreak, which made some people panic, so the Brain Pop lesson would be a useful resource that isn't overly "techy". The video is non-threatening in the sense that the language and terminology is not incredibly technical (although it might be a little too technical for some), so as long as the teacher wouldn't feel any stigma about learning from a website aimed to children, it would be educational. I really like the "Identify it" activity connected to it, because knowing which situations are or are not likely to result in a virus attacking is important. Because everyone at school has access to our account, the teachers could complete the activities at their desk on their own schedule.

Learning about viruses could fall under the 2008 teacher NETS as put forth by the ISTE under the need to "demonstrate fluency in technology systems and the transfer of current knowledge to new technologies and situations." A variety of other standards would apply if the teachers looked at other lessons under this section such as blogs, the internet, social networking, etc. The copyright lesson would fall under "advocate, model, and teach safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology, including respect for copyright, intellectual property, and the appropriate documentation of sources."

# Software/Website Evaluation Form

Title of Software/Website: <http://www.brainpop.com/technology/computersandinternet/>

Intended Grade Level: Teachers, actually

Content Area: Computers, blogs, viruses, copyright, storage devices

SA	A	D	SD	NA	Content
X					The content is accurate.
X					The objectives meet my curriculum needs.
	X				The reading level and vocabulary is appropriate for the intended user.
	X				The website/software has various levels of instruction for varied abilities.
SA	A	D	SD	NA	Technical Aspects
X					Uses the unique capabilities of the computer.
X					Sound can be turned off.
	X				Maintains a record of student performance/progress.
X					Instructions are clear.
X					User can skip over familiar instructions.
SA	A	D	SD	NA	Design
X					Graphics and sound add to effectiveness of the program.
X					Screen format is well planned and consistent.
		X			Difficulty of instruction adjusts according to student response.
	X				Feedback is effective and appropriate.
X					Students can access menu to change activities.
	X				Responds to errors effectively.
SA	A	D	SD	NA	Support
	X				Documentation is clear and comprehensive.
	X				Print materials are provided for students.
	X				Additional learning activities are suggested in the documentation.
SA	A	D	SD	NA	Motivation
X					Easy to use.
					The students will like it.

### Three things I liked about the website/software:

1. Videos can be closed captioned.
2. Multiple options for taking the quizzes (all in one go, or feedback).
3. The variety of supporting information for each area (the activities, quizzes, experiments, Q&A, FYI).

### Three things I disliked about the website/software:

1. Related subjects (located on the top and both sides of the video) can't be right clicked on to open in different tabs/windows.
2. The answer key for the activity page isn't readily accessible (which is logical, but not for my purposes).
3. Wish they had even more content.

**My Overall Recommendation:** Use for students, use for kids.

## Evaluation

### Content:

There is a wide variety of content within the computers and internet section of Brain Pop (and even more if Brain Pop, Jr. is included). Some of the lessons are very specific (such as mp3) while some are more broad (internet safety). Brain Pop generally does a good job of cross-referencing lessons under the different sections, but I saw a few (CD and fax machines) that did not appear in the Computers and Internet section. When watching a video, there are other suggested lessons on the sides. The content is presented in a variety of ways and from a variety of perspectives (informational video vs. hands on experiment). Some of the lessons feature language that is not appropriate (too complex) for some my “students”, but on the whole the information is accessible.

### Technical

Brain Pop pulls in a lot from the computer, including sound, animated video, text, printable material. The sound can be turned on and off, and the videos are closed captioned. Since there are no individual logins, student progress is not saved. I was able to take the same quiz several times in a row. The instructions vary from “Click here to play movie” (very easy) to instructions on the activities (usually pretty clear) to the instructions on the experiments (which are also clear, but a little more convoluted).

### Design

There is extreme continuity and repetition in the layout so navigation is simple. All icons, characters, colors, etc. are consistent. With the quizzes, there is the option to take a graded quiz, with all answers reviewed at the end, or a review quiz where a user must select the right answer before progressing. For the review quiz, if the user selects the wrong answer there is a pop-up telling the user to try again. Giving a hint or some feedback as to where to find the answer would be more useful.

### Support

Most of the materials associated with a video lesson are able to print. Each of the video lesson has additional activities attached to it and suggestions for other topics.

## Motivations

I think it's easy to use because of the consistency. The button for quizzes is always in the same location, ditto for activities and the rest of the supporting content. I hope that the teachers would like it, as long as they didn't feel insulted that they were learning from a site aimed toward grades 3 through 8. I learned things, and I'm a tech person.