

Primary Mathematics
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Using the World Wide Web for Teaching Primary Mathematics Part 2 Downloading Software

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DOWNLOADING SOFTWARE

A wide range of mathematics programs are available for downloading via the Internet. Many are teacher-aids, e.g. puzzle creation programs. Some are modules that can be used for demonstration purposes, e.g. a program which will show 3-d solids and create their nets. Some are fully developed programs, such as adventure-maths games.

These programs are made available on the Internet under four main types:

FREEWARE - as it says, free to download and use. Sometimes made available by institutions that have developed a piece of software for educational use, or by companies who have upgraded a program and are tempting you to buy an improved version.

DEMONSTRATION - this is usually an 'advert' for software which you have to buy. These programs do not run the full version and are only of use to look at a product before you buy.

SHAREWARE - a program made available for you to try out - and then pay for if you choose to keep it. If you do pay for shareware, it is usually offered at a very cheap rate. For some shareware it is down to your honesty to pay after a certain amount of time of use, say 30 days - if you do not pay, the program keeps reminding you to do so. Some shareware has an in-built 'time switch' so that after a certain length of time it will no longer work at all.

SALES - full version programs which you pay for before you download. Don't, unless you know of the company and the product.

Downloading via the Internet is usually quite simple, the web site will give instructions.

However, there are dangers to downloading!

1. Legality - if you are downloading shareware, then you really must be honest and pay for it if you are going to keep it.

2. Malicious programming. The Internet is the main source for the spread of computer viruses - the very worst can destroy your computer equipment! It is necessary to be careful when downloading software. Some general safety rules are given below :

a. Always use a good virus protection program. A good program is updated at regular intervals and you have to pay for this service.

b. Consider who you are downloading from. If it is from a reputable company, it is unlikely, (though not impossible) to contain a virus - it would do their business no good. If the program is being recommended by an official institution, again it is unlikely to contain a virus.

c. Check the rules for downloading, if any, that may be issued by your local authority. Some forbid downloading onto any machines they have provided.

d. If in doubt, don't download it unless you know how to 'manually' check a program.

Some programs are available through the web sites listed in the next section, for example Math Forum.

Details of two other sites to consider are listed. Considering the warnings above, please note that I am not recommending these sites - if you want to try them, you do so at your own risk.

<http://shareware.com>

A company that specialises in offering mainly shareware and demonstration programs of all kinds, and some freeware.

Many thousands of programs are listed. It has a search facility to seek out mathematics or educational programs. By request they will also provide a free weekly e-mail listing of new programs available.

When you do download some programs, they come in a compressed format to speed up download times. There are various programs available to decompress this software - the most popular 'WinZip', is also available from Shareware.Com

<http://ftp.sunet.se/>

Swedish **U**niversity **N**etwork - all sorts of items are available through SUNET - maths games, puzzle programs, art packs, flags, games.....