

EarthNet: a Canadian education resource has its roots in the Maritimes

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EarthNet is a unique website directed at the needs of Canadian earth science educators. These needs, expressed by teachers who have attended science teacher conferences and workshops, centre on the easy access to basic earth science information. This information must be reliable, accurate, and based on the Pan Canadian curriculum. If this information is produced by Canadians and includes Canadian examples, all the better. EarthNet aims to meet all these conditions.

To ensure the creation of an educational resource that is accurate and useful, input from and collaboration between the geoscience and education communities are essential. The EarthNet Committee is the group that leads this critical mechanism. The Committee includes most of the authors of this abstract. In addition, links with the nation-wide Canadian Geoscience Education Network allow the Committee to make connections with other established outreach groups across Canada. The EarthNet development team is located at Geological Survey of Canada (Atlantic). Without all these people and their knowledge, experience and steady enthusiasm for collaborative outreach products, EarthNet would simply not exist.

The educational materials and teaching resources on EarthNet can be accessed via eight main sections: "Activities",

"Teaching Resources", "Geology in the Classroom" (a Q&A facility), "Earth Science Site of the Week", "Especially for Teachers" (a section facilitating communication among teachers), "Glossary", "Calendar of Events" and "Dynamic Earth" (mini-tutorials). The site is designed for ease of use by teachers in constructing lesson plans. Periodic reviews of the site by teachers throughout Canada will help to ensure a truly useful resource.

New initiatives entail the creation of new sections tentatively entitled "The Virtual Field Trip" and "Geology in Your Community", as well as continual expanding and updating of existing sections. To provide a means by which teachers can communicate to others within their community about like-minded topics and issues, the installation of a list server and/or chat room is planned.

Because EarthNet would not be possible without the many contributions of the geoscience community, we encourage anyone who is interested in the project to talk to any member of the Committee and become involved in the project. An enthusiastic interest in education outreach is the only requirement.