

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review the literature and research related to the Internet use for English learning. The review is divided into five parts: the background of the Internet, the services on the Internet, the Internet in Thai education, the Internet in English learning and previous research studies related to the Internet use for English learning.

Background of the Internet

The Internet is a global resource connecting millions of users. It began as a military computer network in 1969 by the United States. The originating network was named ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network). Other government agencies and universities created internal networks based on the ARPANET model. The National Science Foundation (NSF) provided the catalyst for the Internet today. Then, they began a chain of connections in which institutions would be connected to their neighboring computing centers, which well all tied into central supercomputing centers. The beginning of this expanded to a global network of computer networks that now allows computers all over the world to communicate with one another and share information stored at various computer servers anywhere in the world. The Internet is governed not only by any official body, but also organizations which work to make the Internet more accessible and useful (Montecino, n.d.).

Services on the Internet

Nowadays, the Internet is an important part of human daily life. It brings the world to people's fingertips. People can shop and travel via the Internet, get authentic materials from anywhere in the World Wide Web, and obtain information and communicate with others around the world. Because of these, the Internet has become a popular technology that spreads through education, business, economic, and society.

There are many services of the Internet that are commonly used, such as the World Wide Web (WWW), Electronic Mail (e-mail), Internet Relay Chat (IRC), and downloading.

The World Wide Web is an interlinked collection of hypertext document (web pages) residing on web servers and other documents, menus, and databases, available via URLs (Uniform Resource Locators). Web documents are marked for formatting and linking with HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and web servers use HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) to deliver web pages” (Intajuck, 2001, p. 100 as cited in Crumlish, 1995).

An electronic mail (e-mail) is the message that is sent via a computer network. E-mail messages are created by a person using a computer. Then, the messages are transmitted to other computers and read by one or more persons using computers. People can use an e-mail to exchange messages around the world. For example, a student in England can communicate directly with another student in Thailand and in other countries (Barron and Ivers, 1996).

Another primary Internet service is Internet Relay Chat (IRC). It is a popular program that allows real-time chatting with people anywhere in the world. Users can select from thousands of channels to talk in real time with users around the world (Sperling, 1998).

Lastly, downloading is to transfer a file from the Internet onto someone’s computer; right from one’s web browser (Sperling, 1998). Many downloads are free due to their nature of promotions, freewares, demos and others. Some free downloads are special updates and services provided by the creators of certain programs; for example, Windows update, computer virus definition updates and more along this line. Unfortunately, most of the available downloads are not free. The Internet, however, does not retrain many teachers and students from downloading all sorts of information and lesson plans from all sorts of sites on the Internet (Sperling, 1998).

As the Internet is getting more and more popular in the last few years, people use it more and more because it provides worldwide information and people can communicate faster with each other. Many fields can get advantages from it: business, politics, economics, education, etc. This implies that it has become more and more

important worldwide to know how to read and write English to use the Internet services.

The Internet in Thai Education

Nowadays, information technology (IT) is a major force that has brought about revolutionary changes in the development of the global, digital economy and society. Education is considered as the foundation for development and the concept of IT use in education is strongly encouraged in many countries. The Internet has many benefits for English learning and teaching. Many schools allow the Internet into their curriculum for supporting their students' foreign language learning, and Thailand is no exception. Accordingly, Noranha (2003) states that the Internet access for school throughout Thailand could help to create more equal opportunities in education, leading to the raising of educational standard of the country. As Thailand needs a well educated workforce adept at the use of IT, the Internet is believed to be an opportunity to enhance the concept of learning. It can also change the teacher's role and introduce the idea of student-centered learning environment. Many schools are trying to join this revolution.

In Thailand, the government made a great educational reform with the 1999 National Education Act (NEA). The major aspects of this reform are to improve efficiency and effectiveness of learning. Students are encouraged to become critical and creative thinkers to acquire facility with ITs, and to develop their learning and individual potential based on the philosophy of 'student-centered' learning. In 2002, the Thai government announced plans to install computers connected to the Internet in all high schools, and to make the Internet and 'e-learning' or 'Online learning' the technology of choice for the Thai higher education system. (Suanpang, n.d.). The government and related private organizations have integrated IT into schools for enhancing Thai education. They provide many projects related to the use of the Internet in schools to support Thai education.

SchoolNet Thailand was set up as a pilot project in late 1995, Thailand IT Year. Originally, the objective of the SchoolNet was to provide the Internet access to secondary schools throughout Thailand. It was designed to provide free Internet dial-up access to 1,500 schools nationwide. Now, the SchoolNet's aim has been changed to

allow both public and private schools at primary or secondary levels to participate in the project, and has been renamed SchoolNet@1509 (Kiattananan and Koanantakool, n.d.). It provides interaction between teachers and students by provoking increased involvement in curriculum development, and as a result expands the available resources. Furthermore, SchoolNet links classrooms from different schools and helps students to collaborate electronically on joint projects online as well as providing access to the Internet and the telecommunicative world for all schoolchildren (SchoolNets, 2004).

The projects mentioned above enable Thai schools, teachers, students, and some Thai people to access the global Internet services to learn what they are interested in and to improve their quality of life.

The Internet in English Learning

The Internet has emerged as an outstanding new technology for educational use, especially for English language learning. The Internet can be used in teaching English because it provides a variety of authentic English language for students. Moreover, there are many materials for listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and culture on the web.

Concerning language learning, many people see the Internet as a vast information resource. It contains easy-to-use links to a variety of useful information resources for second language learning because there are more and more search engines for many languages, including English, which provide useful information in the target language. Furthermore, interactive materials, exercises, and tutorial resources provide prepared materials designed especially for language learners (Kitao, K. and Kitao, S., n.d.). The Internet can help students in learning or practicing language proficiency. It opens doors to multicultural education, establishes real-world learning experiences, provides higher-order thinking skills, and increase motivation and writing skills (Barron and Ivers, 1996). Not only can students use the target language frequently and autonomously, but they can also “record” their conversations in a text file which is instantly retrievable on their home computer. These log files can be used individually or in class to evaluate the students’ performance in a real, meaningful situation with native speakers, enabling the students to detect deficiencies,

errors affecting comprehension and unsuccessful conversational strategies, etc. It also provides a wealth of authentic materials in the target language that can be analyzed; for example, unknown vocabulary that can be looked up in a dictionary or a text corpus using concordances. In this study, it can help students to become autonomous language learners who can take responsibility for their own short and long term goals, analyze past performance as well as plan future activities. Further, the computer and the Internet resources serve to assist human-human interaction, computer-mediated communication between groups or individuals, offer possibilities that have only recently been explored and continue to develop, and create language learning opportunities outside the classroom (Schwienhorst, 1997).

Teachers can use e-mails in class. This can help reduce students' anxiety because they do not have to communicate face-to-face with their teachers. (Shetzer, 1997). According to Barron and Ivers (1996) most Internet communication projects in schools are using e-mail. E-mail messages offer the students an opportunity to express themselves and to learn from others beyond their communities, to practice writing skills, to know other cultures, and to make new friends. E-mail can also encourage students to use computer in an authentic situation in order to develop communicative and thinking skills (Singhal, 1997).

Moreover, the World Wide Web is a great way for authentic language teaching and learning because it provides access to sites in other countries. Web sites cover a variety of topics such as news, sports, entertainment, and health. These sites will help learners read and build basic language skills. Likewise, the Internet facilitates collecting of data for class projects, taking online excursions to travel reports and photos from various countries, reading works written by other students, reading fiction, following up on current news and issues, taking virtual field trips to institutions such as museums on the Internet, etc. (How computers can be used in classrooms, 2004).

The Internet also provides teachers and students with a wealth of interesting ESL websites featuring innovative lesson plans, grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening. Teachers and students can find authentic reading practice and writing tasks for all levels of English from the webs (Zieba-Warcholas, 2005). Then, chatrooms make it possible for two or more students to talk on-line about various topics or issues.



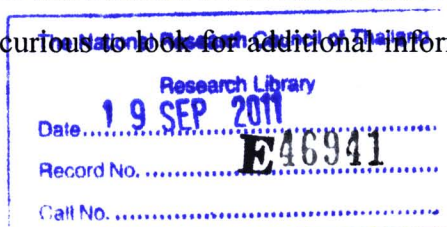
This service stimulates authentic communication and assists students in developing specific communication skills such as arguing, persuading, or defending a particular point (Singhal, 1997).

It can be said that the Internet allows students around the world to interact with others inexpensively and quickly. Kasper (1998) states that the Internet resources provide students with a variety of authentic English language texts. According to Krajka (2000) Because most of the Internet content is written in English, English teachers gain access to an enormous variety of authentic materials relating to all spheres of life at inexpensive cost. ESL/EFL teachers cannot ignore the Internet because technology can enhance the language learning experience. Accordingly, using the Internet offers a more practical real life language experience, providing learners with “functional communicative experiences” which serve the needs of learners and motivate them to use English in their daily lives (Muehleisen, 1997). Likewise, Lin (1997) states that the Internet offers a wide range of opportunities for EFL teaching and learning. The facilities and resources available on the Internet can be tools to help or enhance the learning process. These powerful tools can help teachers implement good teaching. Therefore, the Internet and the use of the Internet in ESL/EFL classes show a great potential. It supports students’ English skills, and improves their knowledge of English.

Previous Studies on the Internet Use in English Learning

The following part is about related research and studies on the Internet use in English teaching and learning. There are both international and domestic studies. The results of these researches showed the beneficial and also unbeneficial related to the Internet use in teaching and learning English.

In 1996, Pedroni (1996) presented “the Importance of the World Wide Web in Education K-12.” This paper investigated the use of modern technology into the acquisition and transfer of knowledge, using resources from the World Wide Web in some elementary schools. It was also aimed to determine whether this new way of accessing knowledge was a beneficial tool in aiding students to a higher level of achievement. The survey showed that students found the Internet resources exciting to use. In addition, students were curious to look for additional information with the use



of the Internet. Likewise, the use of the different tools of the Internet is beneficial to students regardless of learning styles or abilities. Therefore, it can be said that students get benefits from accessing the Internet resources.

Trokeloshvili and Jost in the paper “the Internet and Foreign Language Instruction: Practice and Discussion” (1997) tried to put forth a method of instruction giving consideration to students’ needs and the teachers’ goals. The paper showed how a one-year composition course utilized the computer facilities at a major university in Japan. The conclusion of the paper was that the idea of public displaying of students’ text with the help of the students’ home page highly motivated the students to writing and having their works published, and removed the psychological barriers they might have had with displaying ordinary writing. The web class is also communal in sense: the reading audience has widened; the audience has become authentic; peer response is becoming more common and easier; compositions also have a greater attraction with their aesthetic appeal and students search to produce attractive work.

According to Karayan and Crowe’s study (Barron and Ivers, 1996, pp. 4-5 as cited in Karayan and Crowe, 1997), examining students’ participation in an electronic discussion group, revealed that approximately 50% of the students were more likely to exhibit desired behaviors as a result of participating in electronic discussions. The positive behaviors include thinking more before answering, developing a positive relationship with the instructor, learning class content, and answering peer-asked and teacher-asked research on the use of networking for collaboration and found evidence of improved social skills (Barron and Ivers, 1998, pp. 4-5 as cited in Riel, 1992).

Ranti, Surakman and Santoso (1999) studied the “Use of Internet for Supporting English Learning at Senior High” at BPK Penabur in Jakarta. The research presented the use of the World Wide Web (WWW) in the teaching of writing for high school students and the implementation of using Internet facilities and how it was integrated into the English language lesson strategies. The finding of the study showed that acquiring and summarizing information via the Internet could improve students’ reading and writing capabilities.

“Students’ Perceptions of English Learning through ESL/EFL Websites” (2002) was studied by Shiao-Chuan Kung and Tun-Whei Chuo at a technological college of languages in Southern Taiwan. The study investigated the potential role of ESL/EFL websites as a means to supplement in-class instruction. The purposes of this study were to investigate how teachers could effectively help students learn English through ESL website already available on the Internet and how students perceived learning English through these teacher-selected websites. Forty-nine students enrolled in a high-beginner EFL class were introduced to five websites and instructed to use these websites for homework assignments and for self-study. Then, students were divided into two groups. Each group was given the same 50 minutes training session, at the English department’s resource center. After the training session, they were given two weeks to complete a series of homework activities using the websites presented. Two weeks after the training session, the students were asked to hand in their assignments. The results of the study showed that the students were positive about their learning experience through the ESL websites. Then, they reacted very positively toward the strategies that the teachers used to facilitate their learning through ESL websites. Therefore, the Internet is a useful tool that can be used for teaching and learning materials in ESL classrooms.

It can be said in accordance with Yongyuth Intajuck (2001) that the Internet offers a wide range of opportunities for English education. Additionally, integrating the Internet into the classroom is a great benefit and challenge for ESL/EFL students to acquire language knowledge and communicative competence, and can help them to communicate in English better.

As generally known, the Internet provides a rich and varied source of authentic material for ESL/EFL learners and these learners can practice their target language on the Internet. Many countries realize that the Internet is very important for their teaching and learning, so they integrate it into their teaching courses. While the use of the Internet in teaching and learning is gaining popularity in many countries, Thailand also uses the Internet as a tool in teaching and learning. However, for teaching and learning English in Thailand, there have been up to now few studies related to the Internet use in teaching and learning English.

Tussaporn Vathaniyanon (1999) studied "Relationships between Using Internet Behaviors and Learning Achievement of Upper Secondary School Students, Bangkok Metropolis." Her research studied the relationship between Internet using behavior and English language skills. The participants were 993 upper secondary school students in Bangkok Metropolis. The results showed that there were statistically significant positive relationships at 0.05 levels between English language skills and 21 kinds of Internet using behavior. The first three kinds of behavior found were using Internet at home, using e-mail, and using WWW for improving the English language learning. The statistically significant negative relationships between English language skills and 18 kinds of Internet using behavior were at 0.05 levels. The first three kinds of behavior found were: using Internet with friends, using Internet at friends' homes, and using newsgroups.

Jantima Jinwuth (2001) conducted "A Study of the Use of the Internet by Upper Secondary Level (Mattayom 4) Thai Students who are High Achievers in English Language" to investigate the use of the Internet by Thai students identified by the Office of the National Education Commission, Thailand as high achievers in English. The subjects were 43 Mattayom 4 Thai students and the instrument was a survey questionnaire. The findings revealed that the entire samples agreed that using the Internet was useful for their lives and study, especially in foreign language education. In this study, the top three features of English web sites that the subjects preferred were: 1) various kinds of challenging/interesting activities, 2) information relevant to the titles, subject matters, purposes, activities and procedures, and 3) sites that were not overloaded and not limited to browser technology or software requirements. However, surprisingly, it was found that the majority of students surveyed had never received any Internet training before.

In 2005, Thidakul Boonraksa studied "The Relationship between Internet Usage and English Reading Achievement" of 53 fourth year English major students at Naresuan University in the academic year 2004. It was found that there was no statistically significant relationship between the Internet usage and English reading achievement. The first three academic purposes for the students to use the Internet were searching information, practicing reading skill, and practicing writing skill respectively. Besides studying, the first three purposes for which the students used the

Internet were practicing reading skill, communicating with friends by e-mail, and practicing writing skill respectively. The first five services on the Internet which the students used the most were the World Wide Web, followed by e-mail, downloading, chat room, and Usenet.

However, the number of studies done on the issue of the Internet use in Thai education is still small comparing with great benefits that the Internet offers and the policy of the Thai government that has been trying hard to promote the Internet in provincial schools. The researcher, consequently, is interested in studying the Internet using behavior and the relationship between the Internet using behaviors and English proficiency of Mathayom Suksa 5 students in Nakhon Sawan Province, with the idea that the results of the study would reflect the actual situation of provincial secondary school students' uses of the Internet, which would accordingly lead to the improvement of the Internet using in Thai education.