AS THE SPEED,reliability, and availability of the Internet improve, teachers are beginningto reap the advantages of this vast repository of information for socialstudies teaching and learning. Risinger and Braun have argued that the growthof the Internet will affect the social studies more than any other subjectarea.(1) Teachers may at last be able to engage students in the inquirylearning that was so cumbersome before the advent of nearly instant access todigitized documents, photographs, music, art, and databases. These advantages,however, must be weighed against the potential pitfalls of the Internet as aninstructional resource. The presence of inappropriate and offensive material onthe Internet suggests the need for “lifeguards” as students surf intocyberspace.(2) A WebQuest may be defined as an inquiry-oriented activity inwhich most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from theInternet.(3) The WebQuest approach offers access to online primary sources, astructure for evaluating those sources, and teacher supervision in identifyingappropriate and relevant content. The teacher selects websites and then createsa web page that guides the students through five stages–Introduction, Task,Process, Evaluation, and Conclusion–as follows: * Introduction: provides keybackground information and should motivate students with an intriguing questionor problem. * Task: describes the final product expected of the students. Thefinal product may be as elaborate as an oral presentation using PowerPoint, oras basic as a poster depicting the students’ findings. * Process: givesstep-by-step instructions for completing the task, as well as the list ofresources needed to complete each step. Students are provided with links toInternet resources selected by the teacher, as well as a list of additionaloff-line sources needed to complete the task. WebQuest resources might includegovernment or educational websites, online searchable databases, e-mail addressesof experts, and sources physically available in the classroom. * Evaluation:explains how learners will be assessed on their final product. * Conclusion:summarizes the main goals of the activity and encourages additionalinvestigations on related topics. The following is one example of a WebQuest inuse by elementary students. Exploring Ancient Egypt in Cyberspace Sixth gradestudents at Machesney Elementary School near Rockford, Illinois, recentlyengaged in a WebQuest study of Ancient Egypt. After planning the structure ofthe activity, we used a WebQuest template to create a web page describing eachstage of the project.(4) In the introduction to our WebQuest, students weretold that they would be traveling back in time between 2000 and 5000 years tothe land that we know as Egypt. We posed questions such as, “What do you thinkwe will see?” “How will the people communicate with one another?” “What willtheir daily lives be like?” and “What kinds of scientific advances will they beworking on that will still be around today?” The task we posed for the studentswas to gather information about Ancient Egypt to be placed in a Time Traveler’sGuidebook. Each student created a guidebook that included three entries foreach of the learning stations they visited. The learning stations included (1)the Land and Time, (2) Daily Life, (3) People and Culture, (4) Arts, (5)Science and Technology, and (6) Mummies and Pyramids. Students selected theinformation to include in the guidebooks based on what they thought would bemost

important for a traveler in Ancient Egypt to know. The guidebooksconsisted of pocket pages that allowed students to insert cards with drawingsand descriptions of significant facts. The process section of our WebQuestguided students through six learning stations over a two-week period. Teams offive or six students worked at a new station each day.

WEBQUEST : USING INTERNET RESOURCES FOR COOPERATIVE INQUIRY