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Webscape

August 12th 2004

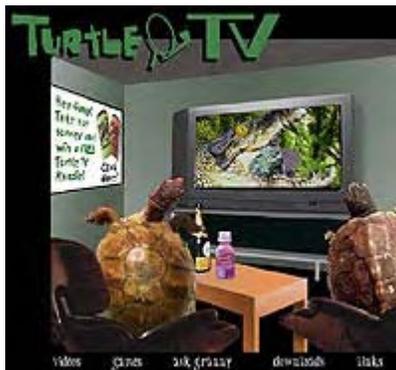


Kate Russell gives us a guide to the sites in her Favourites folder.

I know I can be a bit of a bore when it comes to the science of our oceans. But I also know I'm not the only person with an insatiable thirst for knowledge on the subject of the sea... and well, it's been ages since Webscape took a cruise down into the depths. If marine biology floats your boat, then you can do far worse than take a dive into this glossy and highly informative website. [Marine Bio.org](http://www.marinebio.org)



sets out to educate and inform. Here you can learn about new species, get involved with marine conservation work, and join the diverse MarineBio.org community - offering forums, news, discussions and general chat about anything and everything that is fishy. The global navigation panel on the left splits the website into easily manageable categories, or you can use the tabs across the top to search through all the contents within a broader genus. There are plenty of pictures and even a smattering of video plus, of course, loads of information about the many thousands of species that live in our seas. If you're studying or thinking of studying Marine biology, then the links under Research in the online left hand panel, towards the bottom of the front page, will no doubt come in very handy. One really nice touch they've included at the bottom of each species page is a References and Research box, which has useful search tools automatically completed with the correct information to guide you to more in-depth research material. There's even a translation option linked straight to Google's web page-translation tool. Very useful if English isn't your native language. As a scuba diver, I found their link to Scuba Diving in the left hand panel especially interesting, as it opened a section charting the history of the sport right up to present day.



You think we humans are the dominant species? Well, take a look on the Internet and you might be forced to think again. Remember a few weeks ago we mentioned a website dedicated to the work of [Koopo the Turtle](http://www.koopatheturtle.com)? Well, since then it seems that turtle-mania has hit the Internet with some force - although admittedly not much speed. Strange websites dedicated to this dignified species keep springing up all over the place - and I thought [turtletvnetwork.com](http://www.turtletvnetwork.com) deserved a mention. Not because it does anything important, mind you. It's utterly pointless. But someone has put a lot of time and heart, into this website. It is essentially a showcase of videos featuring - you guessed it - turtles and tortoises. The best way to understand it is to load up a video. Click the One with a French Chef link on the video page, to see some poor turtle hurtling down a road in a shopping trolley, spinning the decks and even performing stand-up comedy to an empty room.

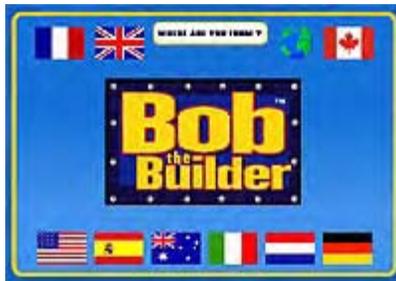


24 HOURS
24 HOURS

Thankfully you can rest assured no turtles were harmed in the making of this particular website. Some well executed computer graphics, and a cunning use of costumes made out of felt, give these movies a cult-humour look that could well catch on. I like the front end, though it is quite graphics intensive, so those with a slower connection may find it a little sluggish. But all the clips are offered in Real Video, Windows Media or Flash movie, for both broadband and dial-up connections - so as long as you don't mind a download wait, you can enjoy the movies with no problems.

Our next website was [sent in](#) by viewer **Stan Smiljanic**. He edits this free interactive website, [Serbian School](#), which helps English speakers learn the Serbian language.

Although the front page is not very welcoming in terms of pictures and swish graphics, I have to say the use of the headline underneath Serbian School really grabbed my attention. I just had to click it, and doing so launched me into a Class registration form to get started in earnest. You'll need to register, but no personal details are required, and the system will then remember your lessons and your progress visit after visit. The lessons themselves are clear and concise, starting with a simple tutorial guiding you through everything you need to know about the site - including installing the Cyrillic fonts. All lessons and sections are given with an approximate completion time too - very useful if you're squeezing your study in at lunchtime or in the evening. Altogether this site really impressed me with its simple functionality - although the language itself looks quite complicated, so you're going to have to bookmark it if you seriously really want to learn it.



The last site this week is another great one for our younger viewers. What is it about kids and building stuff? Bob the Builder personifies a child's need to create, and at [bobthebuilder.com](#), you'll find a delightful virtual world where this famous children's character and his friends all live. Don't worry about the blaring theme tune to begin with - it only plays through once for each visit to the website, thank goodness - and here is a totally safe online environment for your little

ones to explore and play in. The village map has hidden areas that launch cute flash games, and there's even a section for parents too - well, we don't want the grown-ups feeling left out now, do we? And that's it for another trawl through the oceans of information available on the world wide web. Do keep those suggestions [coming in](#). Happy perusing!