



Onsite Solutions

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The Best Things Online ARE Free

BY LISA TROSIEEN

Whether you are looking for some online courses to improve your company's Intranet or you are just looking to improve yourself, the Internet has a wide variety of courses available to help you with just about anything you could possibly want.

Need to brush up on your typing skills? Head over to www.learn2type.com. Take the typing test to check your speed and accuracy. Their interactive exercises automatically adjust to your speed and accuracy, so you will continue to be challenged as you progress. They even have a resource page to provide you with extra information on carpal tunnel, one-handed typing and more.

¿Habla usted el español? If the answer is "no" or you have no idea what I just asked you, you need www.studyspanish.com. Sign up for the very basic free classes or pay \$14.95 per month for their enhanced instruction. You can also buy a CD-ROM at the site if you'd rather learn that way.

Do you know the difference between JPG and GIF? Do you think that HTML is an abbreviation for the free e-mail service, Hotmail? Have you been frustrated with searching for information on the Internet because you keep being buried in irrelevant information? The site for you is www.newbieclub.com. Everything on this site is guaranteed to be written in "newbie speak"—in other words, no Internet lingo

and none of those darned abbreviations. Sign up for a free class, download free books (don't worry ... they walk you through the download process very well) or go to the Newbie Club forum and post a question. It's all there and it's all free.

Looking for a new marketing idea for your community but you just can't think of one? How about inspiration on a daily basis, delivered right to your e-mail box? At www.ideasiteforbusiness.com, you can sign up for the Marketing Idea of the Day. Not only do you get a fairly decent (and often usable) marketing idea, you also get recommendations on marketing books.

Would your high school English teacher cringe at some of the letters or memos you've written to your residents or co-workers? If your grammatical skills could use a brush-up, sign up for the Daily Grammar lesson at www.dailygrammar.com. As long as you're going to start dazzling everyone with your improved grammatical skills, why not work on your vocabulary at the same time? Point your browser to www.wordsmith.org (that's dot ORG, not dot COM) and sign up for A Word A Day. You'll get a word and its definition, as well as a sample of how it can be used, sent to you each weekday.

If you're looking for something a bit more inspirational and a little less academic, sign up for the daily serving of Chicken Soup

The Internet is a great place to learn a new skill, but beware! Sites come and go on the Internet at a rapid pace and many sites that are "free today" are "pay tomorrow."

for the Soul (www.chickensoup.com). A bit stressed out? Maybe the newsletter from www.simpleliving.com is for you.

The Internet is a great place to learn a new skill, but beware! Sites come and go on the Internet at a rapid pace and many sites that are "free today" are "pay tomorrow." Utilize what's available but don't get too attached. Always have a back-up plan in case your favorite teaching site shifts gears on you. ■

Lisa Trosien is an author, educator and consultant with more than 20 years of industry experience, as well as an expert on targeted uses of the Internet for all facets of the multi-family housing industry. She is a frequent presenter for the National Apartment Association and has served on the Units Editorial Advisory Board.