



# **TrackStar Web Site Guided Track**

**EDUC-W200 Using Computers in Education  
Project 2**



# What is TrackStar?

***<http://trackstar.4teachers.org>***

TrackStar is an online teacher productivity tool that allows you to select exactly the web site and URL that you want students to view and make that exact site available to them via the online site <http://trackstar.4teachers.org>. According to the TrackStar web site, “TrackStar is your starting point for online lessons and activities. Simply collect Web sites, enter them into TrackStar, add annotations for your students, and you have an interactive, online lesson called a Track.”

Imagine a teacher in a computer classroom of 3rd graders who wants to direct her students to several web sites about the state of Indiana. She announces to students that they are to open their web browser and go to <http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Indiana#Demographics>. At what point in her speaking the URL will students get lost? . . . Exactly! It may take several minutes to get all students viewing the same web page. This presents not only lost instructional time, but a classroom management nightmare as well. (Imagine the teachers' exasperation when she considers getting all her students to her *second* chosen site!)

## **TRACKSTAR to the rescue!**

To see a sample TrackStar track of teacher productivity tools, follow these directions:

1. Launch a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox.
2. Go to <http://trackstar.4teachers.org>
3. On the homepage, locate the “Find a Track” area in the right column; then find the “View Track #” box in that area.
4. Enter the number **126621** and click on the “Go” button.
5. You’ll see the title screen for a track called *Internet Productivity Tools* by Cindy Millard (she’s a friend of mine who is an elementary school library media specialist at Westwood Elementary in Stillwater, Oklahoma).
6. Find and click the “View in Frames” button.

You can navigate from site to site using the links in the left-side navigation bar. There are 8 sites to visit.



## Project 2 – Team TrackStar Track

For this project, each of you will create your own TrackStar track, but the sites in the track will come from you and your team members. Each of you will be responsible for supplying 5 sites to your teammates.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Create a TrackStar track with 15 related sites. No more than 3 sites from any one domain.</b>	Assignment not completed.  <b>0 points</b>	Track contains only your 5 sites, none from your teammates.  <b>2 points</b>	Site contains all tracks, yours and your teammates'.  <b>3 points</b>	
<b>The track has a single, obvious topic related to the team's chosen standard for this project.</b>	Your contributions to the track are not related to the chosen standard.  <b>0 points</b>	Your contribution to the track relate to more than one standard . . .  <b>1 point</b>	All your contributed sites are on a single topic related to the standard.  <b>2 points</b>	
<b>All links in the track work and take students to the intended site.</b>	Few of your links actually work. (0-2)  <b>0 points</b>	Most of your links work. (3-4)  <b>2 points</b>	All 5 of your links work properly.  <b>5 points</b>	
<b>Each site is annotated with adequate notes AND a question or task** for students. Annotations are the most important aspect of this project!</b>	Generally, all annotations are weak, lacking one or more necessary components.  <b>0 points</b>	Sites are annotated, but some annotations may be missing information, and/or lack a recordable-answer task.  <b>7 points</b>	All 5 of your sites are fully annotated with robust notes and each annotation includes a question or task with a recordable answer.  <b>15 points</b>	
<b>Annotations demonstrate competence in writing skills (spelling, grammar, mechanics of writing). Annotation should include your initials.</b>	Postings have obvious spelling, grammar, and/or mechanical errors. Initials not included indicating ownership.  <b>0 points</b>	There are one or two errors in spelling, grammar, and/or mechanics.  <b>2 points</b>	There are no noticeable errors in spelling, grammar, or mechanics. Each annotation include initials indicating ownership.  <b>5 points</b>	
<b>Teammates indicate that you did not provide your 5 required sites.</b>	<b>-20 points !!!</b>			
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b> <i>30 Possible</i>				

\*\*See page 7 for further annotation instructions!

***Don't forget to post the link to your TrackStar track in the appropriate spot in the Oncourse drop box!***

## ***Rubric Explanation***

<p><b>Create a TrackStar track with 15 related sites. No more than 3 sites from any one domain.</b></p>	<p>The track will contain a total of 15 sites; however, you'll be responsible for locating only 5 of those 15. Your teammates will also find 5 sites and share their sites and annotations with you. When you create your track, be sure your 5 sites are the first five in your track. TrackStar won't allow you to include more than 3 sites from any one domain, so you and your teammates will have to work together to ensure that you use a satisfactory variety of sites.</p>
<p><b>The track has a single, obvious topic related to the team's chosen standard for this project.</b></p>	<p>Following the instructions for choosing an Indiana Academic Core Standard and grade level for this project, you and your team will select a single topic on which to base your decisions about which sites to include in the track. As you discuss possible topics, keep in mind that they should be narrow enough to be related to the standard, but broad enough to allow you to find suitably age-appropriate sites for the project.</p>
<p><b>All links in the track work and take students to the intended site.</b></p>	<p>Obviously, you won't purposefully select links that do not work. But, you should take care to check that the URL you've entered into TrackStar works as you intend. Some sites won't allow themselves to be opened in "frames," the system TrackStar uses for displaying sites, links, and annotations. If you find such a site (it happens to someone every semester!), ditch it and select another!</p> <p>When selecting links, keep in mind that you should copy the URL of the exact site and page you want your students to view. Annotations should NOT include instructions to "click" on links to pages deeper in the site. TrackStar's purpose is to take student directly to the page to be viewed!</p>
<p><b>Each site is annotated with adequate notes AND a question or task** for students. Annotations are the most important aspect of this project!</b></p>	<p>Besides selecting good sites, this is the crux of the assignment. TrackStar allows you to communicate with your students through the annotation without actually standing over your students' shoulders. As noted on the rubric, an adequate annotation includes the following: a complete description of the site the student is viewing, what specifically the student is to read, do, or see; and a specific task or question with a recordable response. See page 7 for a fuller description and examples.</p>
<p><b>Annotations demonstrate competence in writing skills (spelling, grammar, mechanics of writing). Annotation should include your initials.</b></p>	<p>Throughout the course, this will always be important. You are a teacher who is charged with perfecting young people's language skills. Thus, your language skills must be impeccable! Imagine a parent's horror when they look over their child's school work as sent home by the teacher, and they find grammatical, mechanical, and/or spelling errors. Remember, no one ever gets a pass on <math>2 + 2 = 6</math>; no one should ever get a pass on "We was walking in them woods . . ." Also, put your initials at the end of your annotation just to ensure that I grade your sites, not your teammates' sites.</p>
<p><b>Teammates indicate that you did not provide your 5 required sites? -20 points!</b></p>	<p>This is really bad! If your teammates don't have your sites, they cannot complete their project. I'll know because their tracks will be less than 15 sites long and your initialed annotations will be missing. This is gross dereliction of duty and will cost you 20 points. In addition, DO NOT DELAY in completing your searching, selecting, and annotating! Sending your links and annotations the day before class is unacceptable as that does not give your teammates adequate time to complete their track.</p>

## Annotations

The rubric explanation says, “Besides selecting good sites, this is the crux of the assignment. TrackStar allows you to communicate with your students through the annotation without actually standing over your students’ shoulders. As noted on the rubric, an adequate annotation includes the following: a complete description of the site the student is viewing, what specifically the student is to read, do, or see; and a specific task or question with a recordable response.”

**Imagine this . . .** TrackStar annotations are a place for you, the teacher, to speak directly to your students in an asynchronous (not-at-the-same-time) mode. That is, no matter where your students are in the track, you get to deliver a message about the site the student is viewing.

Annotations are an important (the most important?) part of the track: without them, students don’t know what to do.

So, let’s look at a couple of annotations, one poorly written and one well written.

First, launch your web browser and head to

**<http://schoolsofthought.blogs.cnn.com/2012/09/04/back-to-school-by-the-numbers/>**

Here is a poorly written annotation for this site (note that the annotation includes all the required elements: about, task, answerable question).

**This site is about going back to school. Read the blog entry. How many teachers were there in 2011?**

Note the lack of context, the lack of precise instructions, and the lack of detail in the question posed to students.

Here is a much richer, more well-written annotation for the same site:

***Schools of Thought* is a blog written about education and schools. The blog is hosted by CNN News. It covers education from a variety of perspectives including policy, practice, and people. This particular blog entry looks at a series of numbers related to education, both K-12 and college/university.**

**Read the entire blog posting . . . as you read, think about which number groups you, your school, your teachers, and your parents are members of.**

**Now, go back and find the number of elementary and secondary school teachers working in U.S. schools in 2011. How many were there? Then, estimate whether that number is more/greater or less/smaller than the population of the state of Indiana.**

Note that this annotation is more detailed, more specific, and includes both a point of focus for students as they read the blog and two questions with recordable answers.

Annotations you write for project 2 should be as rich and detailed as the second example.





## Quick Guide to TrackStar

TrackStar home page: <http://trackstar.4teachers.org>

### To Make An Instructional Track

1. First be sure that you have located several Web sites you wish to feature in your Track. You can feature no more than 15 sites within a Track. These sites should be related to a topic you are teaching. You will need to know the title of each site and its URL (Web address). You will also want to plan the sequence of these sites. Last, you should think about what you want the student to do at each site. If they are to answer specific questions, you may want to plan those questions before beginning the Track.
  2. If you want to make a quiz or Web page to include in your Track, you should do this prior to making the Track. Be sure you know the full URL (beginning with <http://...>) of these pages prior to beginning the Track. Take the **Make A Quiz** or the **Build A Web Page** link from the TrackStar home page to make a quiz or Web page.
  3. Click **Login to Make or Edit a Track** on the TrackStar home page.
  4. On the **Login** page, either register (if you have never made a Track before and do not have an account) or login. You will need to remember your e-mail and password to edit your Track or to create others, so be sure you write it down and keep it somewhere safe. This information will not be sold and does not obligate you to anything. TrackStar is a free service.
  5. When you login by filling in the blanks and clicking either the **Register** or **Login** button, depending on which you did, you will be taken to your **My Account** page.
  6. The **My Account** page lists all the Tracks you have made. Above this list, click on the **Make New Track** link.
  7. Use the **Help** link on the top of all TrackStar pages if you have trouble filling out the form. Otherwise, just click in a box (field) and type in the Track title, description, type, subject area, and grade level. You may also choose to enter a Due Date or Password, if you wish.
  8. Be sure you are careful when you choose the grades and subjects for your Track. This will help other teachers find the Tracks they need.
  9. At the end of this form, click the **Next** button.
  10. Now simply click in the title field and type the title of the first site you wish to include in your Track. Then click in the URL field and type (or copy and paste) the URL for that site. Then click on the Annotation field and type any instructions or descriptions you wish to provide the students related to this first site. Continue doing this until all your sites are included in the Track. Then scroll to the bottom of the form and click **Save**. Wait for the **Confirmation** page to appear. It will give you the Track number and the full URL. You can view the Track immediately by clicking on the link on the **Confirmation** page. Be sure you know the number of your Track. You and your students can use this number to find the Track quickly.
  11. Read the **Tutorial** on the TrackStar home page if you wish to see step-by-step detailed instructions.
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## To Edit or Delete Your Own Track

1. If you wish to edit your Track, choose **Login to Make or Edit a Track** link from the TrackStar home page.
  2. Login by typing in your e-mail address and password and click the **Login** button.
  3. Look for the Track's title on your personal **My Account** page. Next to the title is an **Edit** link represented by a pencil and a **Delete** link represented by a red "x". Click on either the pencil to **Edit** the Track or the red "x" to **Delete** the entire Track including all its sites and annotations.
  4. If you choose **Delete**, you will be asked to confirm that you want to delete the entire Track.
  5. If you choose **Edit**, the form with all the data from your Track will be generated.
  6. Make any corrections to the Track. Correct typos, change URLs, titles or annotations, or delete sites. It works like a word processor. Simply click or select the part you wish to change and type the correction. To delete a site from your Track, simply click the red "x" next to that link. Click on **Preview**, represented by a magnifying glass, beside a link if you want to check the link. When you have made all your corrections, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the **Save** button.
  7. Read the **Tutorial** on the TrackStar home page if you wish to see step-by-step detailed instructions.
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## To Find A Specific Track

1. If you know the number of the Track, type in the Track's number in the field (blank space) next to **View Track #** located under the **Find a Track** column on the TrackStar home page. This is the easiest way to direct students to a Track or set of Tracks.
  2. If you know the author, choose **Search Tracks by Author** link on the TrackStar home page, then fill in the author's last name or e-mail address. Click on **Find Tracks** and wait for the results page. Be sure to use upper and lower case for this search (e.g., John Smith not john smith)
  3. If you know the topic (e.g., ancient egypt), choose **Search Tracks by Keyword** link on the TrackStar home page, then type the word or phrase (e.g., "ancient egypt") into the form. Narrow your search by choosing subject, grade, format, or award. Click **Find Tracks** and wait for the results page. Using lowercase makes it more likely you will find all the Tracks that include this word or phrase for the grade levels chosen (e.g., "ancient egypt" not "Ancient Egypt"). Be sure to use the search instructions at the right-side of the Keyword search page to get the best results.
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## To Find Thematic Tracks

1. If you want Tracks that relate to a particular academic theme that may have many keywords associated with it (e.g., Western Expansion), choose **Browse Themes and Standards**. Click on the subject and grade level desired (e.g., Social Studies, grades 5-8) and wait for the results page. You will be given a listing of themes in the left-hand frame. Click on the desired one (e.g., Western Expansion) and a listing of pertinent Tracks will be placed in the large frame to the

right. You can also see State academic standards associated with this theme by clicking the State tab (e.g., Kansas) in the upper right-hand frame. This will help you select Tracks that fit your State's academic standards.

2. If you want to see Tracks that relate to specific holidays that have been selected and/or written by HPR\*TEC staff, choose **See This Month's Track-A-Day**. By each day of the month is a link to a Track that is related to a holiday. Most of the Tracks are related to holidays described in the Knowledge Adventure's Month By Month software in order to assist teachers using this series.

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### To Find Exemplary Tracks

1. If you want Tracks that have been selected by HPR\*TEC staff as exemplary Tracks, choose **See All Top Tracks** link on the TrackStar home page.
2. If you want to find Tracks, WebQuests, and Web sites that have been selected by HPR\*TEC as useful for teaching specific subject matter (e.g., Colonial literature), go to <http://4teachers.org/> and select the **R\*TEC Teacher** link under the **Tools for Teachers** section in the right-hand column. This will open a page with a pulldown menu. Click the **select a subject**, then continue narrowing your search by selecting a **theme**, and finally a **topic**. You will obtain a list of several Tracks, WebQuests, and Favorite Links for that specific topic.

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### To Use A Track

1. When you select a Track using a hyperlink, the Track number, or by typing in the URL, you will find yourself at the **Description** page of the Track. This page describes what the Track is about, and has buttons entitled **View in Frames** and **View in Text** for viewing the Track.
2. For student use, we recommend the **Frames** version. Click on the **View in Frames** and you will be taken to the material in the Track. Many teachers start their students with the **Frames** view already open. The lower right-hand portion of the window (frame) will always show the first site when you open the Track. To change the site, click on one of the links listed in the left-hand frame (Navigation frame). Notes related to the site being displayed are found in the upper right-hand frame (Annotation frame). They will change as you click on the links. This area will also provide the correct URL for the site being displayed. If you wish to reference (cite) a site found within a Track, always use the URL provided in this Annotation frame.
3. To review a Track quickly, print a Track, or use a screen-reader, use the **Text** version. Choose **Print** from your browser menu bar and you can print this page. Clicking on the links will load the sites. Use the **Back** button on your browser to get back to the **Text** page.



# TrackStar Web Site Worksheet

In order to complete the requirements for Project 2, you'll need to locate 5 or more web sites contain content related to the topic you've chosen and are appropriate for the age group you've chose.

For each site, record exactly the URL and then write an annotation of what the site contains and the question/task for students. See page 7 for details on annotations.

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Site 1. URL \_\_\_\_\_  
Annotation \_\_\_\_\_  
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Site 2. URL \_\_\_\_\_  
Annotation \_\_\_\_\_  
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Site 3. URL \_\_\_\_\_  
Annotation \_\_\_\_\_  
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Site 4. URL \_\_\_\_\_

Annotation \_\_\_\_\_

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Site 5. URL \_\_\_\_\_

Annotation \_\_\_\_\_

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