

## Recent developments and changes to Intute

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### **Abstract:**

*For those who are not very familiar with Intute, this article will give a brief overview of this free online service. It will then cover recent changes and developments to Intute's Virtual Training Suite and website.*

### **About Intute**

Intute (<http://www.intute.ac.uk>) is a national Internet service (funded by JISC) whose main purpose is to help UK Higher Education students find the best web resources for their academic studies and to guide them in making discerning use of the Internet. The service is completely **free** to use – no subscription or registration is required.

Intute is created by a consortium of seven universities, working together with a number of partners. The Intute Internet Resource Catalogue (IRC) is created by subject specialists and a national team of external content providers who select

resources and create associated metadata including resource descriptions. Catalogue records are stored in one database and are retrieved by Intute users through search and browse functions. The subject specialists (and external content providers) identify Internet resources that will be of interest to their target audience and the resources are then evaluated against a set of criteria which take into account points such as the resource's purpose, authority, accuracy, currency and the coverage and depth of the information.

#### **About Intute: Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health subject gateway**

The Intute team based at the University of Nottingham manages, amongst other subjects, the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health subject gateway ([www.intute.ac.uk/nmah](http://www.intute.ac.uk/nmah)). We are fortunate in having the Midwives Information and Resource Service (MIDIRS) as external content providers to our IRC. All Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health resources are evaluated according to guidelines that can be located by going to [www.intute.ac.uk/nmah](http://www.intute.ac.uk/nmah) and clicking on the Evaluation Guidelines link. As with all subject gateways, the records within our IRC are reviewed at varying intervals, depending on the resource type – for example, learning materials are reviewed every year, bibliographic databases every two years and papers/reports/articles/texts every three years. We check that the current description reflects the content of the resource/website and if not, we make the appropriate alterations to the description or other metadata. To further ensure the quality of the IRC, the subject specialists check all the broken links that have been identified in Intute's link

checker, which is run once a week. Any records whose links can not be mended are suspended from the catalogue until such time as the information required to mend the link has been obtained.

### **About Intute: Virtual Training Suite**

Intute's Virtual Training Suite ([www.vts.intute.ac.uk](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk)) consists of over 60 **free** interactive online tutorials whose purpose is to help university students develop their Internet research skills and to avoid the pitfalls of using the Internet for their coursework and assignments. All tutorials are written and reviewed by a national team of lecturers and subject specialists from around the UK and there are tutorials for most university subjects.

### **About Intute: other services**

Intute provides other **free** services that may be of interest to information professionals. These include a support page on the website for librarians and information professionals which highlight how to make the most of Intute (e.g. adding the Intute search box to your website). The page can be accessed from [www.intute.ac.uk/librarians.html](http://www.intute.ac.uk/librarians.html). Details of all Intute's

**Integration Services** can be accessed from [www.intute.ac.uk/integration/](http://www.intute.ac.uk/integration/)

**Informs** ([www.informs.intute.ac.uk/about.html](http://www.informs.intute.ac.uk/about.html)) is a free tool for the creation and sharing of interactive online tutorials. It consists of easy to use software and a database of shared tutorials.

### **Recent changes to Intute's Virtual Training Suite**

Following extensive user feedback, Intute have completely overhauled the content and design of 31 of their 62 tutorials in order to take into account Internet developments, particularly the impact of Web 2.0 technologies in higher education and changes in online academic publishing etc. The feedback received indicated a growing recognition of the need to help students develop Internet research skills. It also suggested that helping students to understand peer-review was more important than ever in a Web 2.0 world of user-created content.

New editions of tutorials that will be of interest to the Libraries for Nursing membership include:

- Internet for Nursing ([www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/nursing](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/nursing))
- Internet for Midwifery (brand new tutorial)  
([www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/midwifery](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/midwifery))
- Internet for Health and Social Care  
([www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/healthandsocialcare](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/healthandsocialcare))
- Internet for Medicine  
(<http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/medicine/>)

The coverage of the four main sections of each tutorial is now as follows:

- 1) **TOUR** – focuses on the academic information landscape on the Internet and aims to create a mental map for students of the key scholarly sources for their subject.
- 2) **DISCOVER** – offers updated guidance on how to find scholarly information online; choosing the right search tool; and looks at the importance of developing a search strategy.
- 3) **JUDGE** – discusses how critical thinking can improve the quality of online research and provides guidance on how to judge which Internet resources are appropriate for University work.
- 4) **SUCCESS** – provides practical examples of students using the Internet for research – successfully and unsuccessfully, so that students can learn from the mistakes of others, as well as by example.

These tutorials are now shorter, easier to read online, and have more graphics and exercises. Interactive features of each tutorial include quizzes, practical exercises, and a 'links basket' functionality which allows the user to keep a record of all website URLs mentioned in the tutorial (over 100 in the Internet for nursing tutorial, for example). These features have proved popular with students. Each tutorial takes around one hour to complete, allowing users to work through the material in their own time and at their own pace. Feedback from university staff suggests that they find it useful to point students to the tutorials from course handbooks, VLEs and library web pages. There is also evidence that they are being used to support courses in research methods, study skills and information literacy. Intute plans to update the remaining 31 tutorials, including **Internet**

**for Allied Health** ([www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/alliedhealth](http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/alliedhealth)), in 2010.

### **Recent changes to Intute's website**

The updated Virtual Training Suite has been part of a wider programme of improvements to the Intute website. Following extensive market research and usability testing in 2008, the website has been redesigned with higher education students in mind. These changes include an updated look and feel and easier navigation – for example, the Home Page now lists 19 top-level subjects which are more closely aligned to university courses. This means that the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health gateway is now accessible from the Home Page.

**MyIntute** has been simplified, with all the functionality now on one page. This personal space allows the easy setting up of subject-related alerts by email or RSS and the export of bookmarks to social bookmarking sites.

Hopefully readers are now more aware of Intute, its services and recent changes. If there are any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. Intute is also very keen to receive feedback about any aspect of our service!