



Soil-Net.com

A soils educational resource

Dr Stephen Hallett
National Soil Resources Institute



Defra Policy Rationale

➤ **UK DEFRA: The First Soil Action Plan for England** (May, 2004)

Soil is one of the essentials of life, along with air and water. Yet it is so much a part of everyday life that there's a danger of taking it for granted. Covering most of the earth's land surface, it is the essential growing medium for our food, timber and other crops. It supports the buildings that we live and work in and the roads and rails that move us around.

Objective One, “Defra will work with stakeholders to develop a programme of education and awareness of soil issues among the general public, those working with soils and the professionals that guide, advise or instruct soil managers.”





Where's the Soil ???

➤ Geography

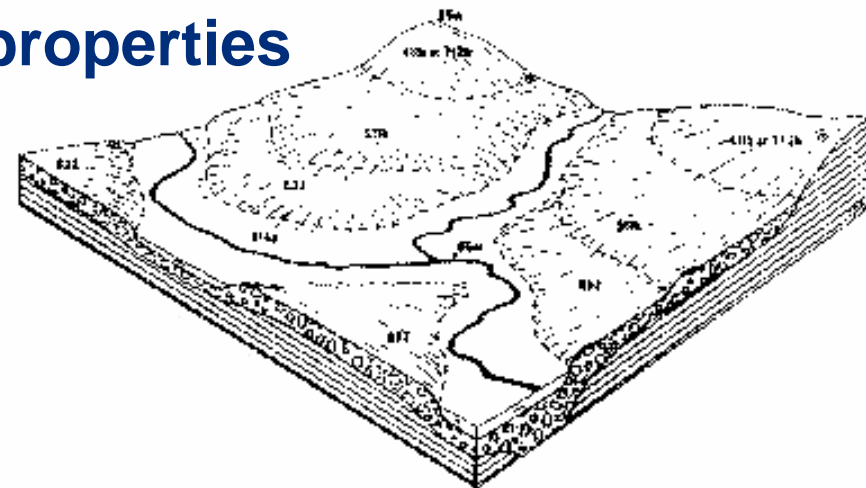
- geographical enquiry and skills
- environmental change and sustainable development

➤ Science: life processes and living things

- variation, classification and inheritance
- green plants as organisms
- living things in their environment

➤ Science: materials and their properties

- acids and bases
- geological changes



Where's the Soil ???

➤ History

- settlements, events, people and changes in the past
- historical interpretation

➤ Citizenship

- responsible living

➤ ICT

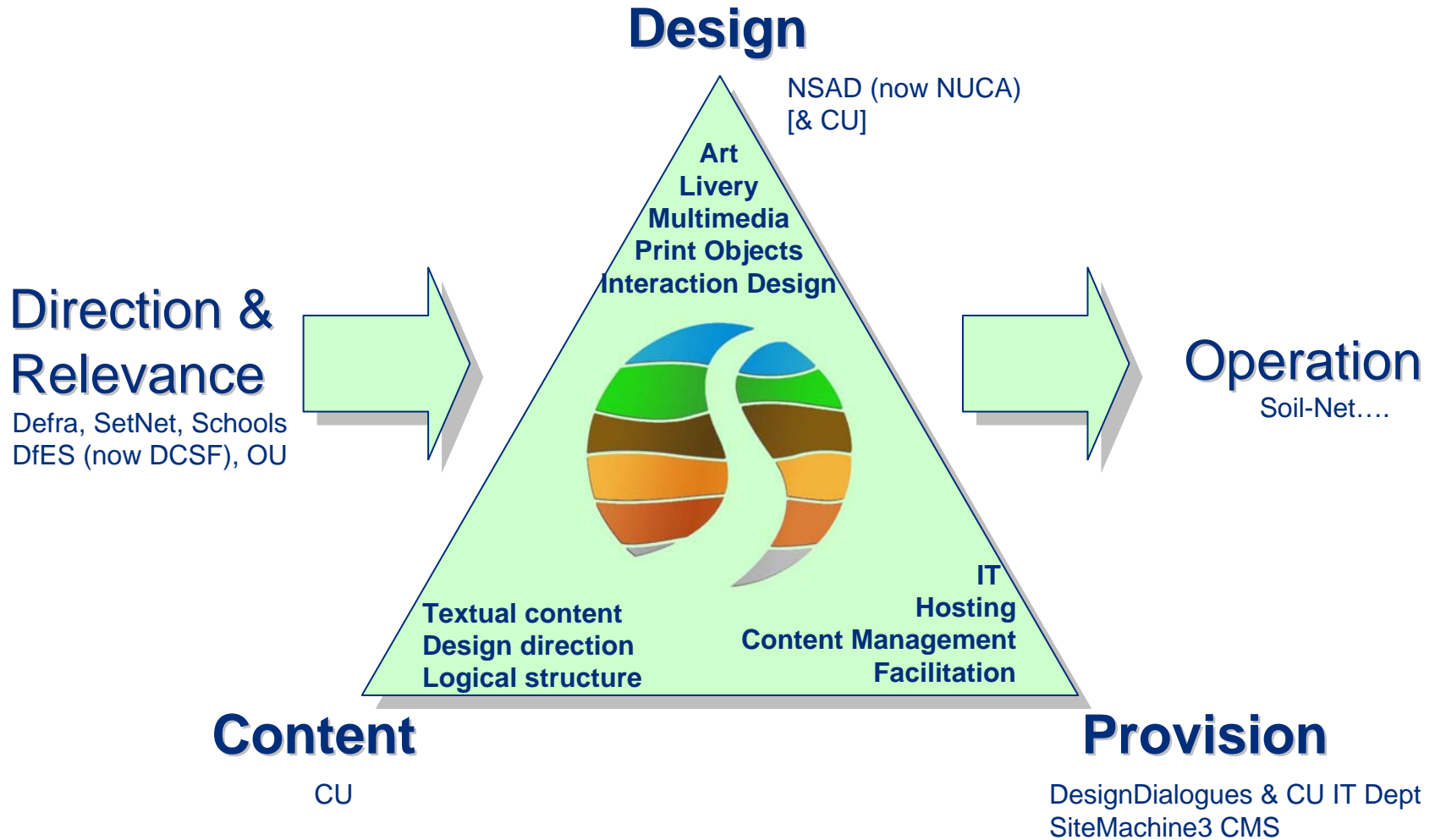
- environmental data

➤ Art and Design

- texture, natural forms
- mother nature designer



Soil-Net Responsibilities





Welcome to Soil-net.com



About Soil-Net.com

Primary

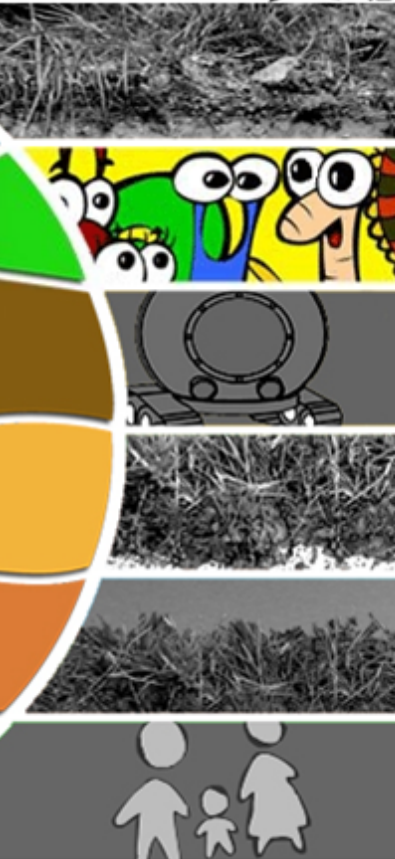
Key Stage 1 & 2

Secondary

Case Studies

Activities

Teachers and Parents



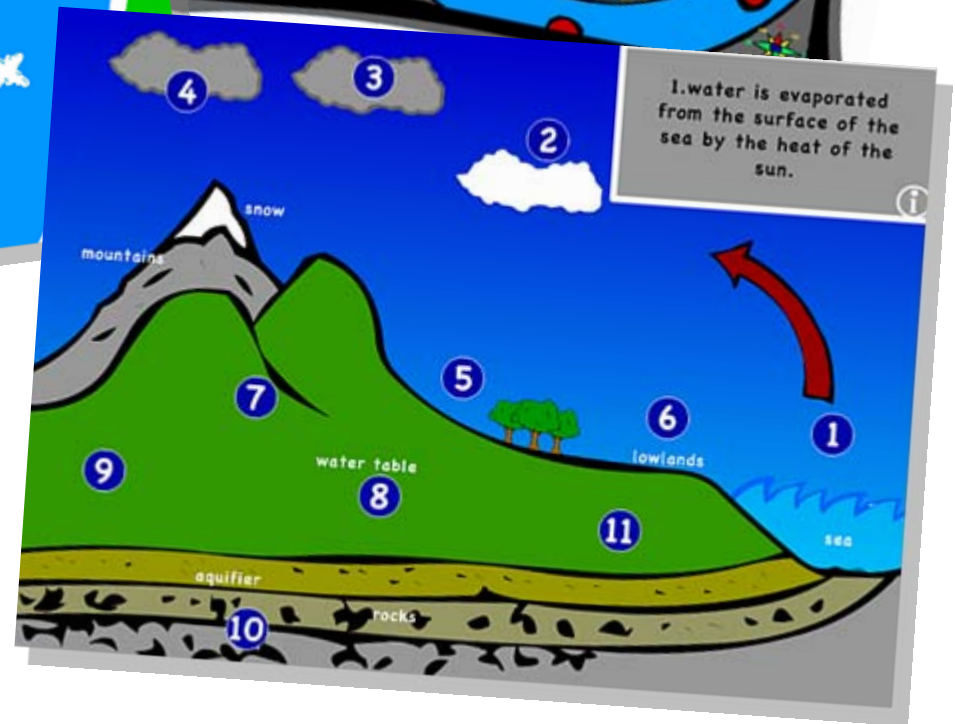
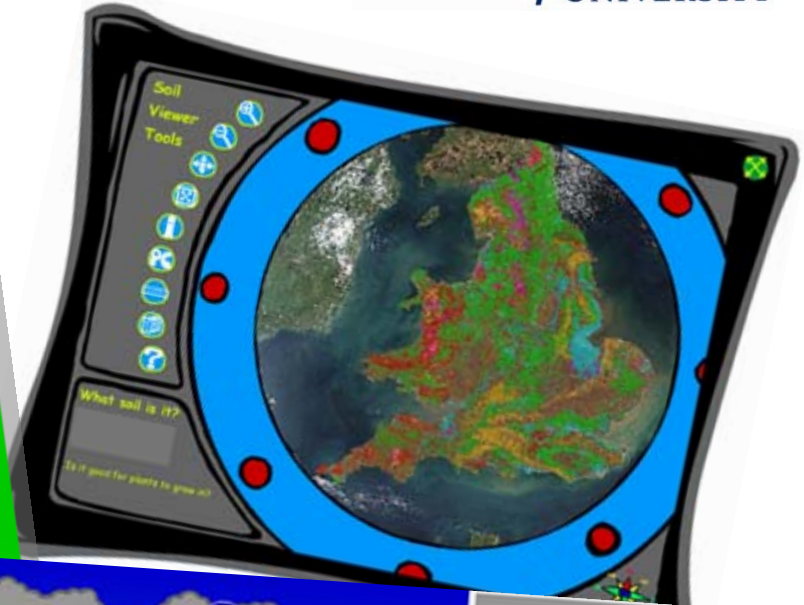
<http://www.soil-net.com>


[Make Soil-Net Your Homepage!](#)

[Legacy Soil-Net site](#) | [Donate to Soil-Net](#)



Interactive Rich Media





Secondary

What is soil?

Themes: [Introduction](#) | [The uses of soil](#) | [What people think of soil](#) | [Quiz](#)

Homepage

Introduction

What is soil?

Why does soil matter?

Soil under the microscope

Recognising types of soil

Weathering and soil formation

Properties of soil

Soil character

pH and soil acidity

How do soils form?

Why do soils differ?

Soil as a living being

Plants and soils

The beginning of soil

Global Cycles

Soil Functions

Soils on Earth


Threats to Soil

Future Concerns

Soil is one of the world's most important natural resources. Together with air and water it is the basis for life on planet earth. It has many important functions which are essential for life. Not only does it play the major part in allowing us to feed the world's population, but it also plays a major role in the recycling of air, water, nutrients, and maintaining a number of natural cycles, thereby ensuring that there will be a basis for life in generations to come. Without soil, the world's population neither would nor could survive.

Soil forms the surface skin over the landscape of the earth at the junction between the atmosphere and the **lithosphere**. Think of soil as a thin carpet covering the land portions of the earth. The distance from the surface of the earth, at which the soil is situated, to the very centre of the earth deep below, is over 6,000 kilometres. Of this, the soil layer is a mere one to two metres thickness of this 6,000 kilometres. It is thus a very, very thin skin indeed - both fragile and extremely precious.

Soil consists of a mixture of **mineral grains** that come from the rock deposits and sediments beneath them. This mixture gives the overall **texture** of the soil, namely whether the soil is mainly sandy, loamy or clayey. Importantly, soil also contains **organic matter**, mainly in the top 20 cm. Organic matter comes from rotted and decomposed vegetation, broken down by soil organisms. Soil also contains varying amounts of **water** depending on the climate and the **water holding capacity** of the soil. The remaining important ingredient is **air**. The amounts of each of these components varies in time and across the landscape. This is a magical mixture of ingredients that allows the soil to perform many vital needs of living beings.



Did you know?

A 'sod' is a piece of soil held together by a layer of grass - used to create new lawns.

Worm Hole Links

[Secondary: Soils of Britain](#)

[Soil-Net Photo library](#)

[Soils Glossary](#)

Themes: [Introduction](#) | [The uses of soil](#) | [What people think of soil](#) | [Quiz](#)

Soil-Net Structure

Part I Introduction

Part II The Global Cycles

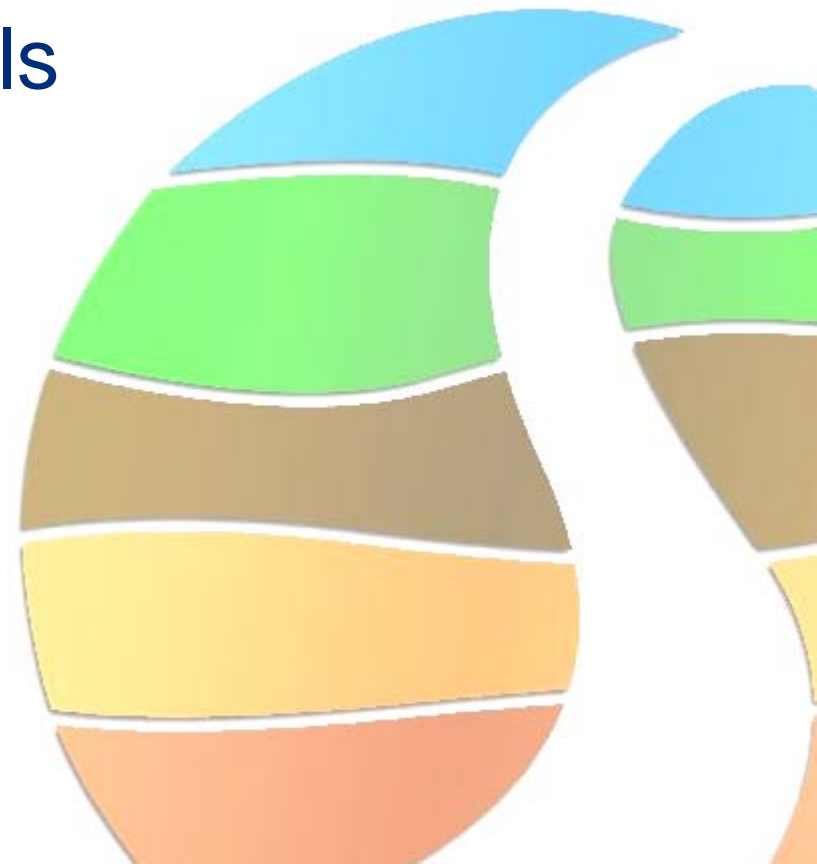
Part III The Function of Soils

Part IV The Soils On Earth

Part V Threats To Soils

Part VI Future Concerns

Part VII Case Studies



Activities and Downloads

Soil-related activity sheets - 120+ activity sheets and resources

Desktop wallpaper - 'green-screen' images

The school garden - run a school garden

Soil walks - a virtual online soil walk

Terrain builder – landscape erosion simulator

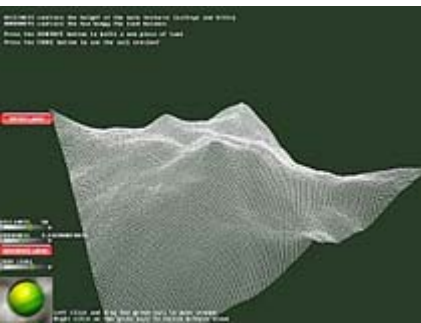
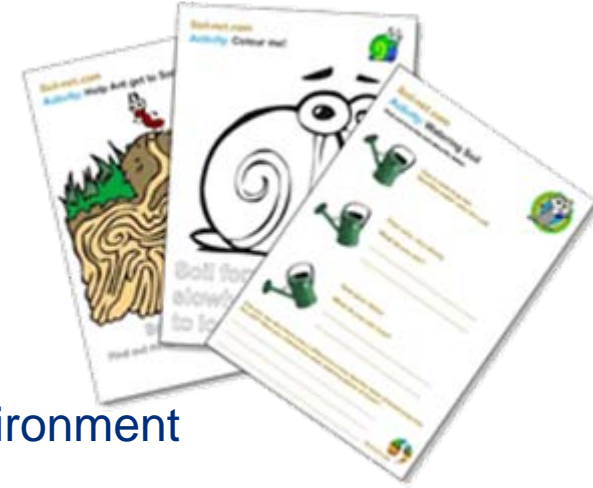
Eco-Lifestyle Quiz - impacts of your lifestyle on the environment

SoilScapes Interactive mapper - online soil map by Postcode

Whose Poo? - you just have to find out!

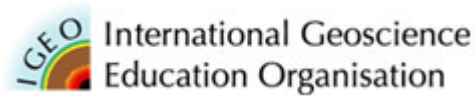
Wormery - study worms and their interactions with soil

Photos - 2,700+ high quality environmental photographs



Referencing Soil-Net

A selection of the sites cross-referencing Soil-Net



**Royal
Geographical
Society**
with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning



Science
LEARNING CENTRES



Google reports 647 cross-links from other sites



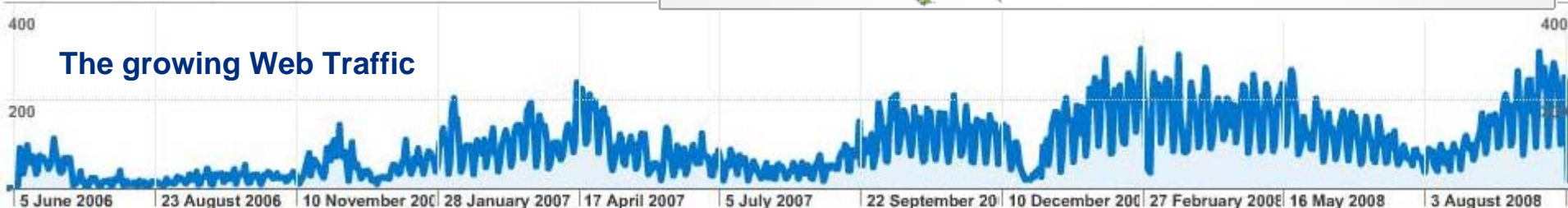
Web Statistics - Results

- **93,423** unique visitors
- **586,959** page impressions served up (pages viewed) on monitored pages

Country of Origin	Visits
United Kingdom	47,465
United States	21,730
Canada	3,631
India	2,540



The growing Web Traffic



Future developments

‘Soil-Net 14-19’

the age group going on to A Level, and Vocational Qualifications

‘Future Sustainability’

planning to manage and nourish existing web resource

‘Promotional Campaign’

to keep Soil-Net’s place in the ‘spotlight’

‘Translation’

of Soil-Net text to other European languages

‘Linkages’

Link to other resources – SoilPIC, SoilsWorldwide, WOSSAC

