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EDU 6700: Advanced Media and Technology  
Software Evaluation: **Sim City 4 (Web-based version)**

Sim City 4 is available as a free web-based game. The URL is <http://simcity.ea.com/>. This site enables individuals to play the game without having to buy the actual product. This can have advantages and disadvantages, depending on your perspective. The actual game for computer is available from many computer game distributors; normal cost is about \$40.

In evaluating the software, I went to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for a multiplicity of reviews. Almost everyone there stated that the graphics of the game were excellent. The level was intense and demanded careful scrutiny concerning the strategy, which I think is tremendous. There were many who stated that the game could be addictive! I have an older version of Sim City (SC 2000), and I know that my wife enjoys playing it as she has opportunity, in spite of the limitations of an older game.

However, some of the drawbacks I saw from the reviews was that, even though the game has many enjoyable aspects, there were too many complaints about needing to have a super-fast motherboard and processor. Several individuals complained about software crashes, even after short sustained play. Others complained about the difficulty level; however, I do not see a problem with this, as I am considering using it for my grades 7/8 World History students, and I think they need a challenge. Maxis has indicated that they have patches available for download from the site, so I'm not sure exactly what the problem is in relation to crashes.

Concerning classroom integration, I found a site that indicates using Sim City and Power Point. Sim City, whether web-based or utilized in the class, will enable me to

teach the skills required in running a virtual city; this will allow interactivity in allowing the students to learn from one another, as developing cooperative group skills. I plan on adding an additional element in teaching the American History course next year of planning a political campaign with Power Point for 2 individuals to run for the virtual office of Mayor.

The students will be responsible to develop and organize every aspect of the campaign. This will enable them to be more politically aware, how important it is to be involved in the political process, as well as being able to use their own creativity. The Power Point aspect will teach them the importance of designing a sharp presentation, further honing their computer skills for real-life implementation. Utilizing the full suite of Microsoft Office will allow them to integrate word processing, spreadsheets, limited data basing, and multimedia presentations. Although there are many details yet to be settled between now and then, I am excited about what my students will be able to learn and do! This is also a plan that can be submitted to the senior high history teacher for implementation in his class, thus enabling our students to be well-rounded in their academics, as well as real-world activities that can affect the course of our county and state in the years ahead.