# TPT *WebSights* column draft for September, 2019:

*WebSights* features announcements and reviews of select sites of interest to learners and teachers of introductory physics. This column is available as a web page at [PhysicsEd.BuffaloState.Edu/pubs/WebSights/](http://PhysicsEd.BuffaloState.Edu/pubs/WebSights/).

If you have successfully used a physics website that you feel is appropriate for *WebSights*, please email me the URL and describe how you use it to teach or learn physics. [macisadl@buffalostate.edu](mailto:macisadl@buffalostate.edu).

**Physics students experience authentic stunt-action at a motion-capture studio in Toronto**

**[fastmotionstudios.com/physicsworkshop](http://www.fastmotionstudios.com/physicsworkshop)**

Toronto-based FAST Motion Studios – specializing in stunt and fight action – have spent the several years putting STEM students through their paces as stunt performers. A special priority has been on high-school physics classes, with a program designed and managed by former OAPT President Dave Doucette. Student teams choreograph a brief stunt sequence and act as stunt actors while filming the results. Professional stunt coordinators and riggers ensure the action is safely performed and provide invaluable feedback on production quality. Students are inspired to pursue college/university STEM fields and to consider specializing in this physics-anchored industry. The studio webpage includes a 5-min video of simple wire-rigging stunts students perform at the site (do not try this at home!). A 20 page question and answer pdf, tied specifically to the video, is available – contact [dave@fastmotionstudios.com](mailto:dave@fastmotionstudios.com). Though a field trip is not practical for many TPT readers, the prevalence of stunt-action footage on Youtube can be the basis for rich physics analysis.

*Submitted by Dave Doucette, former Physics Teacher and past president of OAPT*

**Real-world electricity: Understanding what’s happening in your walls and the electrical grid**

**YouTube’s “Practical Engineering:” Power Grid series**

<tinyurl.com/WS-PEpowergrid>

[youtube.com/user/gradyhillhouse/featured](https://www.youtube.com/user/gradyhillhouse/featured)

**YouTubes’s “The Engineering Mindset:” Energy Engineering Basics series**

<tinyurl.com/WS-TEnggM>

These YouTube channels are particularly appropriate for instructing E&M to nonmajors, such as technology majors who need to know practical things about their electrical environment (and maybe wire their own homes). These channels use industry-standard locutions (Eg. “AC electricity flows from hot to return through the bulb”) that are standard outside the physics classroom (we physicists know electrons just move back and forth in the filament while surface charge gradients change on the wire surfaces). But such is the world we and our students live in—dictated by Occam’s Razor for conceptual models, and appropriate models for appropriate situations and students... To give the author credit, he often discusses limitations to his models (DC rather than AC, water circuit analogies, etc. If you are a purist, and non-physics-standard language and simplified/ incomplete models displease you, you might avoid these YouTube channels. Budding electricians and engineers will love them.

Civil Engineer Grady Hillhouse’s “Practical Engineering” series on the power grid includes “How Does the Power Grid Work?”, “How Electricity Generation Really Works” and “How Do Substations Work” so far, and I expect more forthcoming. “The Engineering Mindset’s” series titled “Energy Engineering Basics” and “Electrical Engineering Basics” discuss three phase electricity, household wiring basics like “ground neutral and hot,” “120V and 240V Electricity: Split Phase 3 Wire” “Power Factor” and “What is a kWh?” There are other videos like “How Receptacles Work,” three- and two-way switches etc. that are useful and interesting. Useful stuff for readers to know about your own home wiring. He also has videos on refrigeration and HVAC systems.

**“TRAINING: Training is Research-based Activities that support INclusive and INquiry learninG” website**

[*https://labtatraining.home.blog/*](https://labtatraining.home.blog/)

*by Danny Doucette*

“The goal of this project is to share a model for one way to do professional development for lab TAs. The activities are active and engaging for TAs, and focus on supporting inquiry learning and promoting equitable group work in introductory physics labs.”

*Submitted by Danny Doucette, University of Pittsburgh Physics.*

**Perimeter Institute for Applied and Theoretical Physics releases two new freely downloadable curricular modules: “Contemporary Physics” and “Fields”**

[**landing.perimeterinstitute.ca/back-to-school-in-a-big-way**](https://landing.perimeterinstitute.ca/back-to-school-in-a-big-way)

Both PI curricula are intended for Ontario Grade 12 High School students and include teacher’s guides and lesson plans keyed to Ontario Standards, worksheets, hands-on activities, challenges, videos, answer keys, templates. The multi-part, one-hour activities are designed around cooperative learning groupwork, and can be mixed or used standalone. I was very impressed with the effort to take these (usually mathematically-demanding) contemporary physics conceptual topics into the HS classroom in a nonthreatening, approachable manner, and with the large variety of hands-on activities and storyline.

Contemporary Physics includes a video and six activities exploring: gravitational energy wells and spacecraft gravitational capture / slingshots, particle detectors at CERN, Heisenberg’s uncertainty Principle (HUP), special relativity (two activities) and a semi-classical model of the Hydrogen atom.

In “Fields,” five hour-long activities and one design challenge first introduce and develop the concept of noncontact interactions and fields. Then, hour long hands-on activities looking at E fields between point charges and parallel plate electrodes (9V battery, LED and tap water), Maxwell’s Equations are presented, magnetic fields and aurorae are explored, gravitational fields, general relativity and the precession of Mercury’s orbit are examined (via paper cones) and an MHD propulsion system challenge is provided.

*Submitted by Greg Dick,* [*contact@perimeterinstitute.ca*](mailto:contact@perimeterinstitute.ca)