English 110-113 Information Literacy Session #1

Information Resources
and Online Databases

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Agenda

- What is Information Literacy?
- Overview of Information Formats
- Electronic (Online) Resources Overview
- The World Wide Web
- Functionality of Databases
- Evaluating Resources (overview)
- Database exploration guides

What is Information Literacy?

- Knowing how to find information in a variety of ways, in a variety of formats.
- Knowing how to appropriately evaluate information in all formats.
- Knowing how to properly cite information in different formats.

Steps to Becoming Information Literate

- Begins with having a need for information
- Understand what information is needed (purpose, topic, what you need to find out).
- Understand the extent of the information needed (how much?).
- Understand the type and scope of the information needed (historical, current, factual, opinion, criticism, analytical, combination of types).
- Understand the formats and use of information resources (books, reference materials, articles, videos, audio recordings, maps, experts in the field, etc.)
- Understand what the appropriate tools are for finding appropriate resources to meet the information need (library catalog, online databases, printed indexes, reference sources, browsing, World Wide Web).

Steps cont.

- Know how to use information finding tools (access, navigate, search).
- Know how to construct efficient and relevant searches (relevant search terms, Boolean operators, truncation, refining searches).
- Know how to evaluate the information found (appropriate, relevant, reliable, authoritative, up-to-date).
- Know how to assimilate the information to learn and show your knowledge of the material (critical thinking, connecting ideas, making a point, writing, etc.)
- Know how to properly cite the information found (various formats, footnotes/endnotes, bibliography).

Overview of Information Formats

- Books
- Reference materials
- Periodicals
- The World Wide Web
- Audio-visual materials

Periodicals

- A periodical is anything that is published regularly and periodically, such as newspapers, magazines, and professional/academic journals.
- Periodical literature is important because it provides the most current information available.
  - Publishing in periodical format is much faster than in book format.
  - Medical and scientific fields especially depend on periodical formats for current information.
- It is important to understand the difference between a magazine and a professional/academic journal.
- For your academic pursuits, in most cases, articles in professional/academic journals rather than magazines will be necessary.

Electronic (Online) Resources Overview

- Advantages of Electronic Resources
- Challenges of Electronic Resources
- Types of Electronic Resources

Advantages of Electronic Resources

- Faster
- Potentially anytime/anywhere access
- Lots more information available
  - can also be a challenge
- Potential for being more up-to-date
- Wide availability of online full-text

Challenges of Electronic Resources

- Too much information
  - Lots of irrelevant information
  - Places more responsibility on the user
- Potential for server to crash
  - Must have a "Plan B"
- World Wide Web information may not be reliable

Types of Electronic Resources

- World Wide Web (the shallow (invisible) web)
  - Available to anyone at generally no cost
  - Web pages and information are found through a search engine (Google, Yahoo, etc.)
- Online subscription databases (the deep (visible) web)
  - Available only to patrons of the subscribing institution
  - WWW is a gateway to these databases
  - Documents in these databases are <u>not</u> web resources

The World Wide Web

- General caution
- Web evaluation exercise

Problems Inherent to World Wide Web Use

- **Anyone can put information up on the World Wide Web, which causes problems in reliability and authoritativeness.**
- Common misconception of users is that the WWW is a substitute for traditional information resources.
- The World Wide Web is not organized.
- World Wide Web documents are not catalogued on the WWW.
- Most search engines (Google, etc.) function using keyword searches, potentially resulting in lots of irrelevant data.
- Information can be updated at any point in time, making it difficult to cite versions.
- Web addresses (URLs) can change at anytime.
- Pages can be removed without prior warning.

Evaluating Information on the Web

- Thorough evaluation must be done for professional/academic, and life/death purposes.
- Look for evidence of authoritativeness.
  - Who created the website? (professor, expert in field, reputable company?)
  - What are the author's credentials? (education level, where does s/he work or teach?)
- What is the web site's affiliation? (reputable company or organization, government organization, educational institution?)
- When was it created?
- When was it last updated?
- Is there a bibliography of sources consulted listed in the website?
- Be careful of bias.

Shortcuts to Finding Authoritative and Reliable Websites

- Check domain name extensions in URLs (.com, .edu, .gov, .org).

- Go through links established from library and university web sites, reputable companies, and organizations.

- Go through metadata links in online catalogs and other online sources (ex. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online).

Website Evaluation URL's

http://www.neuroticpoets.com/

http://www.poedecoder.com/Qrisse/

http://itech.fgcu.edu/faculty/wohlpart/alra/PoeFall.htm

Types of Online Databases

- Online catalogs
  - Lead users to physical materials held by the library
  - Electronic books
  - Digitized government documents
  - Some websites
- Periodical index databases
  - Locate individual articles on any given topic
  - Citations/abstracts; full-text
- General Reference databases
  - Locate individual entries in common reference sources
    - Dictionaries/encyclopedias/atlases, etc.
- Subject databases
  - Articles, reference materials, and sometimes books

Common Features in Most Online Databases

- various levels of search capability (basic, advanced)
- variety of search types (keyword, author, title are the most common)
- ways to limit a search
- ways to select, save, and retrieve records from a list of results to narrow down the list
- ability to printout or email selected records/articles.
- offer at least some full-text
- help screens
- navigation buttons/bars/icons/links to move forward and backward through a list or to get to the next record
- internal links to other entries by the same author or in the same subject area

Evaluation Overview

- All resources used for academic/professional purposes, regardless of the format, must be evaluated for at least relevance.

- In most cases, you can assume that materials in academic library physical collections (books, etc.) are reliable and authoritative; therefore, a user generally only needs to evaluate for relevance.

- In most cases, you can assume that peer-reviewed/refereed academic and professional periodical articles are reliable and authoritative ; therefore, a user generally only needs to evaluate for relevance.

- Web resources must be evaluated for authoritativeness, reliability, relevance, appropriateness, and in many cases, how up-to-date the site is.

Database Exploration Guides and Search Assignment

Work through guides for LIBROS-WorldCat Local, Academic Search Complete, and Expanded Academic ASAP.

- Read the steps in the guide carefully.

- Explore the screens to locate features in the databases as indicated in the guides.

- Identify what is requested in the guide.

   Grading criteria for completed guides will be determined by your instructor.

Complete Search Assignment after guides have been completed.

- This will be graded.

Come by or contact the library if assistance is needed