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 not 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 websites, 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/wohlpant/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