

Workshop W “Using the Web for Research: Critically Evaluating Information and Search Techniques”

I. Learning Goals/Outcomes for Workshop

(Either display the goals at www.ccsf.org/Library/instruct/workshops.html or state them. Make clear that this workshop is NOT for complete beginners to the Web; refer them to C Workshop.)

- Improve your ability to use Web search engines for research by practicing ways to narrow results. (20 min.)
- Learn how to evaluate Web pages so better quality sources are used. (25 min.)
- Increase awareness of elements needed to cite Web pages in a “Works Cited” list (5 min)

II. Five-Minute Review of part of the C Workshop and distribute the C workshop handout for those who need.

- What is/is not available on the Web
- Differences between Web search tools: subject directories and search engines – Why use subject directories?
- Components of a URL

III. Search Engines: Search Techniques

A. Techniques/concepts to explain and illustrate: (refer to handout)

- a. Stress the need to read the “**Help**” or “**Search Tips**” to become better Web searchers.
- b. Ways to Narrow and get fewer results
 - exact phrase searching
 - using more search words – stress that most search engines assume AND
 - Limiting searches: 1. by doing field searches (e.g. title, url) which is available in “Advanced Search” and 2. domain limits to .edu, .org
 - Using - to exclude terms/phrases that you don’t want
- b. Ways to Broaden or Increase Results
 - Using OR for synonyms ; in some search engines truncation/stemming *
 - Use fewer search words

IV. Evaluating the Quality of Information

1. **Evaluating the results list (“hit list”)** - show them how to “deconstruct” a URL to see if can get to the main page to learn more about the creator or sponsor. (Good review of components of the URL)
2. **Evaluating a Web page** (refer to handout) – discuss the various review criteria and illustrate using a sample Web page.

If time, consider an active learning exercise: Ask them to work in pairs and use the questions from handout to evaluate a website. Allow 8-10 minutes. If time permits, share some of their answers with the whole class. If not enough time to have them work in pairs, consider this activity with them as a group, but resist answering the questions for them. Possible sites to use:

“Bad”/bogus pages: <http://www.martinlutherking.org/>

Examples of good and problematic sites on various topics **(with reasons why)** are at:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

<http://www.lib.utsa.edu/Instruction/web/web4.html>

V. Practice Time – Allow about 10 minutes at the end. NOT recommended that you distribute the Assignment sheet at the beginning of the Workshop.

VI. Recap – In one minute ask them what they learned and/or restate what was covered and summarize any key points that you want to make. Remind them how to get the “proof of attendance slip.”

Teaching Materials/Handouts to Use:

1. handout “Using the Web for Research”
2. Assignment sheet for Workshop W

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