Library Science
Why Evaluate

Directions: Read the following information about Evaluating Resources, and answer the questions at the end.

Lesson Overview

I learned that anyone can publish to the web, so that means there might be a lot of garbage information out there. Even though garbage attracts delicious maggots, I still don't want to use it in my research projects. Can you give me a little more information about why it's important to evaluate websites?

Sure! We can talk about why it's important to evaluate online sources. We'll also discuss some issues you might come across while you're evaluating these sites. It can be a little tricky.

In this lesson, it is important to learn:

- What credibility means and
- Why we need to check websites for it.

What Information is Best for Academic Work?

What is a credible source? Credible means - Someone or something whose words, ideas, or notions are considered to be verifiable and factual. Information that is able to be believed; convincing, proven.

High Ranking Does Not Always Mean Reliable

Be extra cautious when using a search engine. You will need to prove OR evaluate the sites found through search engines to make sure they are appropriate for scholarly research. Just because a site is listed or ranked near the top in Google results does not mean it is a credible, reliable source that is appropriate for school work.

Some companies $PAY$ search engines (like Google) money to advertise or be listed at the top of your search results page.

You may think that the information that shows up near the top of a Google search is there because it matches your keywords perfectly, but they could be there because they paid Google to put them there!

Sources available through the library - like books, journals, e-books and articles found in databases - have been written by professionals and experts in their field and can be used in a research paper without having to evaluate them and prove they are trustworthy. This saves a lot of time.

Why Evaluate?

VOCABULARY: Evaluate- to judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of; assess:

Example: to judge or evaluate the results of an lesson, experiment, or job.

Evaluate The Intent

When you find information through search engines, it may not have been reviewed by a professional. There are a few things you should think about when evaluating websites. We will cover them all in other lessons, but for now, let’s talk about: Intent
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What Can You Find Through Search Engines?

Remember, the intents or goals of the people putting information online can vary a lot when you find your sources with a search engine.

Search engines can bring you to credible websites such as The New York Times, which has information that was written and reviewed by professional journalists. However, they can also take you to websites whose purpose is to convince you of a certain point of view, belief or position. They can be biased.

It's not always easy to tell when someone is trying to convince you to do something. I was poking around the internet the other day, and I almost bought a mouse trap. How silly would that have been?

Beyond the Facts

Sometimes it’s not as simple as figuring out if information is true or false. You may find websites through search engines that may have changed information in order to make their company or organization look good. You'll learn about that in more detail later on in this course.

There are lots of people out there who want to trick you into believing what they believe, even if it's not true!

To Wrap It Up......

To put it simply:

Using good, reliable sources creates a strong, trustworthy research project - which helps improve the quality of your work (and your grade!).

I can't think of a reason why you would use information you can't trust. Even if I'm just researching birdhouse reviews on my own time, I want to make sure the information I'm getting is reliable!

Questions to answer on next page.................................
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#1. Why might you save time using library resources like databases instead of a search engine when doing research?

☐ Search engines show the best results. Google is perfect for research.

☐ I'm already familiar with search engines, so this doesn't apply to me

☐ Search engines focus on lots of results not the best results, and databases are just the opposite

☐ None of the above

#2. Why would someone post information on the Internet that isn't entirely true?

☐ They are trying to get you to believe in what they believe

☐ They think it's funny

☐ They are trying to sell you something

☐ All of the above

#3. Why is it important to choose quality, trusted sources of information for your research? Check all that apply.

☐ So that the information is based on facts not opinions.

☐ So that the information is not misleading others.

☐ So that the data is accurate.

☐ So that others can use the information for further study or research.