

Information Literacy Lesson Plan: Module 3

[Requires approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours]

ACRL Standard 3: An information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Module 3 addresses how to evaluate information and its sources by

- discussing the benefits and constraints of quotes, paraphrases, and summaries
- establishing criteria to determine the credibility and reliability of sources
- exploring how additional information can be synthesized with existing knowledge
- examining how gained knowledge coincides with or challenges values
- defining research as a process of continuous review and reevaluation

Background Knowledge/Prerequisites

- For Module Facilitators: none
- For Students: Successful completion of Modules One and Two

Materials Needed:

- Classroom with sufficient computers for the group
- Whiteboard and markers
- To learn how much DeVry paid for library databases for the current FY—contact a librarian (a list of librarians and contact information can be found at: <http://www.librarydb.devry.edu/directory.html>)
- Demonstration computer with internet access and a projection unit
- Appendices A-K, as handouts and/or for projection

Student Deliverables

1. Exercise: Evaluating Paraphrases (Appendix A)
2. Exercise: Analyzing Results (Appendix B)
3. Assessing Book Reviews (Appendix E)
4. Identifying Propaganda Techniques (Appendix G)
5. Deconstructing a Wikipedia Article (Appendix J)
6. Research Annotations (Appendix K)

Step 1: Summarizing the Main Ideas to be Extracted from the Information Gathered

[20minutes]

Explain:

One of the first steps in evaluating information resources is being able to effectively dissect them. Just as you cut open a frog in biology class to see the different organs and to which systems they belong, you need to get inside your article, book, or website and examine it more closely. But before we start cutting into our sources, we need to decide how we are going to describe what we find.

Good researchers paraphrase, summarize, and quote the works of others. They also make their own voice heard and craft their own ideas while giving credit to their sources.

One of the key issues here is the ability to paraphrase. Paraphrasing is taking someone else's ideas and putting them into original wording. It is still necessary to *cite* the original work, but paraphrasing avoids long tedious quotes. It is also more than just changing a word or two to avoid quoting the original work!

Often, paraphrasing has the added benefit of not only improving writing, but also of clarifying the author's point. The key to good paraphrasing is to accurately capture the essence of a passage without duplicating the author's language, and putting the idea in an original voice or style of writing, while still citing the idea as belonging to someone else.

Summarizing is much like paraphrasing, but it involves taking a larger piece of information, such as a whole article, chapter, or entire book, and succinctly stating the major points in original wording. Summarizing can be used to describe a work generally, provide background information, or distill an idea or point.

A good paraphrase or summary will:

- retain the same point-of-view or emphasis as the original
- not critique or evaluate the work
- be in an original voice/style, and
- be cited properly (Riedling, 2007)

Here are some tips for good paraphrasing and summarizing:

- Read and re-read the text until you have a full grasp of the writer's points
- Set the work you read aside, and then write what it was about. Having done this, you can then go back to the text and check for accuracy, omissions, and even embellishments
- To help get past some of the writer's wording, use a good thesaurus and dictionary
- Be sure to put any words or phrases directly from the text in quotation marks
- In the text of your paper, you still need to introduce where this idea came from. This is particularly important as there are not quotation marks to set off this passage (Tensen, 2007).

For the Evaluating Paraphrases Exercise (**Appendix A**), students will discern between acceptable paraphrases and plagiarism.

Explain:

Quoting involves taking the words of another and putting them in your work exactly as they were written or said. There are good reasons for quoting:

- The power of another’s words adds a dimension to your writing
- You want to underscore a point, either to agree or disagree with it
- You are comparing or contrasting points of view (Riedling, 2007).

Quoting is most effective when seldom used, unless the exact wording is essential in making a point. It conveys greater punch if used only on a limited basis.

Facilitate:

In the Analyzing Results Assignment (**Appendix B**), students will build on their learned skills from Modules 1 and 2 to effectively summarize. Being able to summarize and paraphrase well are the first steps to evaluating information resources.

Step 2: Articulating and Applying Initial Criteria For Evaluating Both The Information And Its Sources

[45minutes]

Explain:

On the foundation of knowing how to paraphrase, summarize, and quote sources, students will next be faced with the task of evaluating sources.

When researching, the volume of information available is hardly ever lacking; on the contrary, the challenge of researching is recognizing and discarding sources containing incomplete information, misinformation, and disinformation.

For instance, in 1996, the journal *Social Text* published Alan Sokal’s article, “‘Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity’”. After its publication, Sokal openly admitted the article contained “six kinds of nonsense” and was submitted, in part, as a spoof to try and circumvent the peer review process. (Bérubé, 2009). Similarly, in 2004, *USA Today* fired foreign correspondent Jack Kelley, who had been a Pulitzer Prize nominee, after they discovered that he made up portions of eight major news stories (Reider, 2004).

The web is well known for its short-comings as well. From people signing petitions to ban the ominous sounding chemical di-hydrogen monoxide (H₂O, aka water) because it is the principal component of acid rain and can be harmful or fatal if inhaled, to *The Onion* being cited as a

legitimate news source, to reports of a North Korean sub torpedoing the BP oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, there are numerous incidents of people failing to carefully evaluate the information they are consuming (*Ban Dihydrogen Monoxide*, 2003; "It Was a Joke," 2002, p. 8; "Did North Korea", 2010).

Such incorrect or misleading information can be embarrassing. The consequences can also be much more serious. A rumor of a banana crop infected with flesh-eating bacteria came close to damaging the national economy of a Central American country (Brody, 2000, pg. 3).

All sources need to be considered carefully, but ones found on the web require more scrutiny than most. It is important to evaluate the web's resources in particular, because:

- Anyone can post on any topic
- It is growing exponentially
- It is easily accessible and available
- It is a provider and distributor of so much information
- It is perceived so positively
- It is seen as a valuable research tool

There are many differences between a website and a print publication; it is very important to evaluate online [does that mean "web"?] sources because they are **not** always:

- Subject to an editorial or review process
- Organized
- Standardized
- Quality controlled
- Reliable
- Clear about who the author is
- The equivalent to a library
- The only source for research (Beck, 1998; Lubans, 1999).

Effectively evaluating information resources, whether on the internet or in print, is one of the hallmarks of an information literate person.

Evaluating sources is both an art and a science, and it becomes easier with practice. At the same time, there are systematic steps that can be followed to become a savvy information user. Part of this involves the use of critical thinking skills, and another part involves knowing where and how to seek credible information. Making well-reasoned statements and citing quality and reputable sources is characteristic of a credible producer of information.

While there are some general criteria on how to evaluate sources, this should not be seen as a mechanical process. These are general guidelines. How they are applied will depend on the source being evaluated, how it is intended to be used, and individual judgment.

Pre-search considerations: Before you begin researching, it is important to think about what you want to find and where you might find it. A quest for statistical data will start differently than one for which computer to purchase. Your purpose will also shape your search. The quest for information on your favorite new band will differ from that for your senior project in terms of the sources that would be credible and relevant.

Discuss:

When evaluating sources, what criteria are important to consider? How might those criteria differ for print sources versus online sources?

Note: Discussion should go beyond just content to include factors such as ease of use, cost, etc.

Explain:

A general mnemonic for evaluating information sources is **TAAPS**:

Timeliness

Authority

Accuracy

Perspective

Scope

Each of these has a number of sub-components to them, too (Harris, 2007).

Timeliness is more than just asking if the information is recent or current; it is deciding if the information is relevant and applicable. The importance of this depends on the information. Some works are timeless and stand on their own. Other types of information, such as those in the social sciences, have a more limited shelf life. Information in health care professions and the sciences changes with astonishing rapidity. Keeping current in these fields can literally mean the difference between life and death. It is up to the researcher to determine the importance of timeliness.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Just because something is available online, it doesn't guarantee it is current. The 1993 *CIA World Factbook* can still be located, (<http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact93/index.html>), but the world has changed a lot since then.
- It is important to consider when a source was produced or updated. While this is relatively easy for print sources, it can be more challenging for online ones. Be thoughtful about using sources which don't have a date or an old date for time-sensitive information.

- Looking at a website can reveal some clues about how timely the information is. News sites pride themselves on being up-to-date. Fox News (<http://www.foxnews.com/>) publishes when their site was last updated, down to the minute.

Another indicator of currency or timeliness is checking to see if the links are active—if they are not, the site is not being well maintained. If it is not being regularly maintained, the information on it may be out-of-date.

Sometimes, it can be easy to find out when a website was last updated. Enter `javascript:alert(document.lastModified)` in the address field and enter. The date and time of the last update may appear in a window. The browser must have JavaScript enabled in order to do this. This is not fool-proof, as it may only tell when the site was last accessed, but can be an indicator of currency.

Authority is more encompassing. Authority includes the author's credentials, and those of the sponsoring site or publisher (in the case of periodicals and books).

An author's authority is reflected in her/his credentials: her/his education, experience, expertise, position, reputation etc. If there is no indication of who is responsible for a site, more investigating needs to be done.

An author may be more than a person. An author could be a company, agency, organization etc. More information is available about corporate authors on LexisNexis' Company Search, the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, or any other reputable reference source.

Reputable authors and publishers will typically provide their own contact information. Look to see if there is an email address, a telephone number, or a mailing address that can be used to contact the producer of the information.

A website's top level domain name can also indicate what type of organization the site originated with. The .com, .edu, .gov, .mil, .net, and .org endings are all familiar as standing for commercial, educational, government, military, network, and not-for-profit entities.

However, as .com, .net, and .org are open domain names, under which anyone can register, there is little control over who sets up shop using these. For a list of new domain names, see **Appendix L**.

Even with the newer top level domain names, there is wide variation within these as to the quality of the content. The .edu, for example, applies to both elementary schools and research universities.

A domain name can make a world of difference. Whitehouse.net (<http://www.whitehouse.net/>) is an out-of-date parody of the real site (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>) For years, there was an adult site at whitehouse.com.

For print publications, there are some special considerations too. The publisher of a periodical or book can also provide insight as to the content and nature of the information.

In determining the scope and nature of periodicals, there are some tools which the library may have that are of help:

- Magazines for Libraries by C. LaGuardia and W.A. Katz
- The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses by L. Fulton

Both of these guides are designed to describe the scope and content of many periodicals.

In addition, most websites of a periodical will have an “About Us” or similar link, which will tell more about their editorial scope. A link for potential authors can also be a good indicator of the nature of a publication.

Although the phrase “you can’t judge a book by its cover” has become a well-known cliché, there is a great deal of truth to that saying.

Short of reading the entire book, there are some ways of better judging the book:

- The book jacket can be somewhat informative, though it is really designed as an advertising medium.
- The index can show what topics are covered, and the bibliography can be used to see what sources are cited.
- Acknowledgements list the people and organizations that helped the author in writing the book and can tell about which archives, lab, or institutes s/he used to research the book.
- The preface explains the origins, purposes, and scope of the book. This is useful for understanding what the book will cover.
- The table of contents explains how the book is organized and is good for identifying the key points covered.
- The introduction often is used to set the stage for what the author seeks to cover, and explains her/his thesis and the treatment or approach to the subject of the book.
- The copyright, edition, and publication dates will tell how and when the book was published.

In determining the authority of a book, it is important to search for biographical information about the author. Certain assumptions about a book can also be made based on the publisher. As with periodicals, there are certain types of book publishers. These are outlined in **Appendix C**.

While the publisher can conjure an initial impression about a book, a book review reveals much more. Summary, opinion, and scholarly book reviews are good ways to find what reviewers think of a particular title.

- *Summary reviews* are brief reviews that summarize the content, scope of a book, author’s experience, and how the book compares with others usually in just a few hundred words. These often appear in publications designed for libraries and the book trade. Reviewers are often librarians or professors.

- *Opinion reviews* give the reviewer’s opinion about the book. These are more in-depth than summary reviews and discuss everything from stylistic issues, plot, characters, social context of the work, the author’s credibility, etc. This type of review appears in a variety of sources. Newspapers and popular publications often have a section devoted to reviews. Reviewers often have some subject knowledge of the scope of the books being reviewed and seek to provide an educated assessment of the book. One of the best known review sites for opinion book reviews is *The New York Times Book Review* (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/review/index.html>) which provides free online book reviews back to 1981.

With the advent of the internet, almost anyone can post an opinion review. Online booksellers and similar sites often provide readers an opportunity to write and post reviews. Usually these are helpful and informative, if not mildly entertaining. Some reviews can be quite insightful, others become just a forum for the reviewer to rant or nitpick. Customer reviews, as with so much else on the internet, lack editorial oversight.

In 2004, Amazon’s Canadian site inadvertently revealed the names of reviewers for a week. It soon became apparent that something was up. Author John Rechy was found to have given his own works 5 star reviews under the moniker “a reader from Chicago.” He laughed off the episode, noting that stars mean sales. Other authors were revealed to have trashed the works of their rivals! In spite of such shenanigans, reviews do have their place.

Amazon ended the practice of anonymous reviews by requiring reviewers to identify themselves with an Amazon account secured with a credit card. Still, there is no good way to keep friends and family from targeting reviews to boost a loved one’s latest or trashing the tome of an ex or rival (Harmon, 2004, pp. A. 1).

Reviews can also be found on Google by typing in the title of the book in quotation marks and the word “review”. There are also many online sites that host their own reviews or link to a variety of review sources. For a complete list, see **Appendix L**.

- *Scholarly reviews* are written by academics or other experts in the field and published in academic journals. These reviews will often provide summaries and critique the methodology of the author and describe how this title contributes to the literature of the field. Scholarly reviews may appear months or even years after the publication of a book (Book reviews).

Demonstrate:

Using the instructions in **Appendix D**, demonstrate how to search for book reviews in EBSCOhost.

Facilitate:

In the Assessing Book Reviews Assignment (**Appendix E**), students will identify a book related to their topic, find and read two reviews, and then assess the reviews.

{Scoring is based on the quality of the assessment of the reviews. Thoroughness, analysis, and adherence to the conventions of good English should all be considered}

Explain:

There are more books being published than there are opportunities for review, and not all reviews get picked up by library databases. Consequently, there are not reviews for all the books out there. Nevertheless, knowing how to search for a review is an important part of the research process. Another aspect of authority is the corroboration of the content of a source. A bibliography should underscore the credibility of a source to indicate that it was based on solid research.

A skilled researcher, however, will not just assume that the inclusion of sources indicates quality work. These sources should be investigated too to ensure that they are being used within the context in which they were intended and to determine their own quality. Some scholars and professors suggest finding up to three different sources to agree, corroborate, or confirm the information being used.

Accuracy includes a number of components:

- *Completeness*—While a source might not have everything, it should supply reasonably complete information. Sometimes the omission of a crucial point or qualification can be an unintended oversight, but it often indicates sloppiness or haste. If something is missing, it is worth considering if the site appears to be in the process of being updated. Other times, missing information can be an attempt to mislead or deceive.
- *Use of good English*—A poorly written site or publication, while not an indicator of the quality of information, *per se*, is at best a distraction. One cannot help but wonder about the quality of information from a site if the author can't write well or at least use a spellchecker. Poor writing can be a sign of sloppiness, information produced by children, or an indicator that the author is a non-native speaker of English. Poorly written sources tend to be viewed as suspect.
- *Anecdotal evidence*—Anecdotal evidence is secondhand information that is often sketchy and unreliable. It is not a particularly good reason for drawing conclusions. As it is uncorroborated, supporting or disconfirming evidence is needed.
- *Use of accurate statistics*—It has been said that there are three types of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics. Statistics can be manipulated to support all sorts of ideas.
 - Example: On average, 1986 graduates of the geography program at the University of North Carolina were the highest paid in the nation. Hint: Michael Jordan graduated with a geography major and his salary skews the number upward.
- *Fairness*—Does the source present a genuinely balanced perspective and well-reasoned argument? Fairness involves consideration of all the major perspectives without reducing complex issues to simple either-or outcomes, and respecting the opinions of others and their right to differ while not demonizing them. The tone should be calm, reasoned, and rational without getting overly emotional. Writing that seeks to inflame passions often does so to manipulate the reader and keep her/him from drawing clear, logical, and thoughtful conclusions (Gavin, 2008).
- *Moderateness*—This is a reality check. Based on personal experience or knowledge, does the information seem plausible and probable? If the information does not seem valid, there

is an extra burden of proof on the source. Name-calling or shrill -language are signs of lack of moderation.

- **Consistency**—Look to make sure the source does not contradict itself with statements, arguments, or numbers. Inconsistencies or flat-out contradictions can indicate inattention to detail or even deception.
- **Accessibility**- If there is graphical information presented in tables, charts, or graphs, the data should be clear and easy to read.

Here are some questions to ask in examining the accuracy of any source:

1. Is this true?
2. What makes this true?
3. Why should I believe this author?
4. Why is it being said?
5. What evidence is stated that makes it true?
6. Has the claim been tested sufficiently to make it true? (Gavin, 2008).

The Reasonable Person Test—The bottom line is: would a reasonable person believe what is being stated? This test involves issues of fairness, objectivity, moderation, and consistency.

Perspective is the point of view that a source has. This is often referred to as bias, which has certain negative connotations. In today's culture, "bias" has become something of a code word. Complaints of bias usually indicate the reader is less concerned with objectivity, than with their own perspective or bias not being affirmed. Technically, most everything has a point of view or bias. A researcher's job is to determine what that bias or perspective is, and how important that is to his or her research.

A person's world view will often shape how s/he writes about political, religious, social, economic, and other issues. Perspective in a site may also reflect the cultural, geographical, political, social, environmental, economic, or other contexts within which the information was created. In evaluating sites, consider where the information was produced and how that will affect how it is interpreted. Sometimes a person's commitment to a cause is just a matter of perspective. In other cases, a person's commitment to a cause involves distorting or even lying to further the agenda of that cause!

Facilitate:

For the Recognizing Bias Activity, students will look up a recent news event from the Middle East on each of the following news sources:

- Al Jazeera <http://english.aljazeera.net/> [an international news network based in Qatar]
- Arutz Sheva Israel National News <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/> [a Zionist news network]
- CBN News Inside Israel <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/> [a pro-Israeli fundamentalist-Christian news site based in the US]
- Jerusalem Post <http://www.jpost.com/> [a moderate to right-of-center Israeli daily]

- Palestine News Network <http://english.pnn.ps/> [a Palestinian news network]
- Tehran Times <http://www.tehrantimes.com/> [Iran's first English language daily; seeks to export the ideas of the Islamic revolution]
- Ynetnews <http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html> [the English language news website of *Yedioth Ahronoth*, a popular Israeli newspaper]

Discuss:

What are the cultural, geographic, and political issues influencing the perspective of each of these sources?

Explain:

Strong perspectives are often found on websites. There are a number of frameworks which can help to understand types of persuasion.

Let's take a look at one of them. Prior to the outbreak of WWII in Europe, Edward Filene {**FI leen**} and the Institute for Propaganda Analysis identified seven devices which are still useful in identifying how information can be used to persuade. These can be easily seen by using propaganda posters from the early twentieth century as examples. Although they have a long history, these propaganda techniques are still alive and well on the internet today.

The posters are archived as handouts in **Appendix F**.

Facilitate:

The poster examples of propaganda are easy to see from the distance of time and place. Readers will be able to identify propaganda more easily in sites with which they disagree. The techniques Filene identified are quite prevalent in the web, especially on advocacy sites and with advertising. Some scholars suggest that sources purporting to be objective, but actually seeking to persuade are among the most prevalent in society (Tensen, 2007)!

Students will complete the Identifying Propaganda Techniques Exercise (**Appendix G**) by comparing and contrasting two advocacy sites each with different points of view and answering six questions for each.

{Scoring will be based on the choice of sites, analysis, detail, as well as the style and mechanics of writing.}

Explain:

As researchers encounter sources with different perspectives, they must reflect on how they are being influenced. Are these sources appealing to emotions or logic? Sources will often seek to persuade viewers to their point of view. Before surrendering money, votes, emotions, mind, or life to a product, candidate, movement, or cause, it is worth considering other sources on the same topic.

Just as there are tools such as *Magazines for Libraries* that focus on periodicals and reviews that cover books, there are also resources to assist with the evaluation of internet resources.

For a list of myth-busting sites that can be helpful in verifying or disputing any of the rumors, hoaxes, urban legends and/or any of the other partial truths floating around cyber space, see **Appendix L**.

Some firms provide web traffic monitors, media measurement, and site analytics. The demographic information indicates who visits sites. Most of these web analytic sites also show where visitors were before linking to a site and where they go after visiting it. There may also be a place for reviews. These are principally marketing tools, but are useful in that one can make certain deductions about a site based on its audience. For examples of how web analytic sites work, see **Appendix H**.

Scope--Audience and purpose are two crucial points in considering the scope of a site. A web page on dinosaurs will differ significantly if it is for preschoolers rather than paleontologists. Also, consider the purpose of a site. A site about Michael Jackson will be quite different if it is seeking to entertain, rather than persuade visitors about some aspect of his life.

Generally speaking, websites fall into ten major categories (Touro College Libraries, 2010).

1. Advocacy--National Right to Life, <http://www.nrlc.org/> and NARL ProChoice America, <http://www.naral.org/>
2. Business/Marketing--Allstate Insurance <http://www.allstate.com/>
3. News--CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/>
4. Government--State of Illinois, <http://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
5. Non-governmental organizations--The UN, <http://www.un.org/>
6. Informational/Reference--Dictionary.com, <http://dictionary.reference.com/>
7. Educational--DeVry, <http://www.devry.edu/>
8. Entertainment--Netflix, <http://www.netflix.com/Default?mqso=80025836>
9. Personal and social media--Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/>
10. Hoax--DHMO.org <http://www.dhmo.org/>

There are a number of things to consider beyond the content of a source:

- *Advertisements*- Advertisers actively seek to target viewers of sites and periodicals. They want to reach people likely to buy their goods or services. When searching for information, students should consider who the site's target audience is and what that reveals about their audience and purpose.
- *Ease of use and navigation*- This can range from a book not having an index to a website having a search box. If there is not a search box, can SHIFT F7 be used? Another user friendly consideration is the number of clicks needed to get to the information needed. Typically, a user should not have to click more than 3 times to get where s/he wants to go.
- *Aesthetics*--How a site looks does influence how a person perceives a source. However, the old saying about not judging a book by its cover still applies--either positively or negatively. Do the sounds from clicks or music or anything else enhance or impair the information experience?
 - See **Appendix I** for handouts demonstrating the influence of aesthetics.

- **Cost**—If a site seeks to charge users, the benefits of the site should be seriously considered first. Even if the information seems to be worth the cost, how secure is the transaction?

Evaluating sources can be overwhelming. Researchers should adapt their skepticism by degree to the importance of the information. In other words, the greater the significance of the information in a source, the greater the burden of proof. If the information is of little to no consequence, little time and effort should be invested in assessing it (Harris, 2007).

Demonstrate

Demonstrate the evaluation techniques on any sites (non-hoax or hoax list provided in **Appendix L**).

Step 3: Synthesizing Main Ideas To Construct New Concepts

[15 minutes]

Explain:

As you write papers in your role as an information producer you will be producing some new information, and hopefully even new concepts and knowledge. Rather than simply “regurgitating” what you read in articles and find on the web, think about how you can synthesize ideas that you find to construct new concepts!

This involves taking the new ideas or influences and combining them into a new whole in a fresh, innovative, and creative way. As you work through your research projects you will begin to recognize inter-relationships among concepts, and combine them in new and different ways with supporting evidence. As the research process continues, you may begin to think at a higher level about your topic and develop new hypotheses that extend the scope of your research. In advanced research projects, this may even involve using spreadsheets or creating your own database to process your information.

Facilitate:

The Deconstructing a Wikipedia Article activity (**Appendix J**) examines an information source, and then deconstructs it to see how it was created. Such a process reveals how sources utilize the information they incorporate and cite. This can disclose how a source uses information to create a new piece of information.

{Optimally, this activity would be applied to a research article, but given the time constraints of this module, it is being applied to a Wikipedia article, with the intent of demonstrating how new information can be created from a variety of sources. This is one of the more extensive Exercises in the Modules and will require some thought and effort to do well. Scoring should reflect the thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and expression of these on the part of the student}

Step 4: Comparing New Knowledge with Prior Knowledge

[15 minutes]

Explain:

As the skilled researcher digs deeper into the topic, s/he becomes more and more engaged with the information encountered along the way as more supporting evidence surfaces. The process component of research becomes more involved as the student examines the new information to

see how it is unique, compares new knowledge with previous knowledge, and assess to decide if the information gathered is of value, or even contradicts what was previously known or understood.

The researcher will even consider the information affect: whether the new knowledge has an impact on her/his value system and, if so, their efforts to reconcile such differences. At the same time, the researcher will seek to determine the accuracy of the sources supplying the data. It is also important to decide if the information gathered at any given time meets the information need.

As part of the evaluation process, choices must be made as to whether the information selected supports or contradicts information from other sources, or prompts new questions. Based on this, conclusions can be drawn based on the information gathered. It may even be worthwhile to test the information gathered with experiments or simulations. As the researcher becomes increasingly engaged with the information, s/he will integrate the new information with previous information or knowledge.

Facilitate:

{This activity should be started early in the research process, as it is designed to run in tandem with the research process.}

In the Research Annotations Activity (**Appendix K**), students will briefly annotate the resources they gather in the process of their research. These annotations will apply to not only the sources they include in the final paper, but the sources considered earlier yet not included.

{Scoring should be included as part of the paper writing process}

Step 5: Determining if the Research Need has Been Met

[15 minutes]

Explain:

When evaluating a source, the primary concern is its relevance to the specific research need, or if the new information means the initial query should be revised. The good researcher is continually determining if s/he has found sufficient information to meet the needs of her/his query. This is an ongoing, carefully considered process that is subject to change.

It is not uncommon that a source which once appeared to be of value diminishes in importance over time. In extreme cases, the information in a once highly esteemed source may be found to be incorrect, dated, or otherwise flawed. Throughout the process, the researcher will review her/his search strategy and incorporate additional concepts as necessary. S/he will also review information retrieval sources used and expand the scope of the research to include others as needed (Burkhardt, MacDonald, & Rathemacher, 2003; Gradowski, Snaveley, & Dempsey, 1998; Lederer, 2009).

Facilitate:

Seldom- except during a known item search- can a researcher expect to find everything they need the first time they begin searching. As new things are discovered and explored, more and new information will be needed.

This activity is designed to help students think about the completeness of a search in terms of not only the results, but also how it was conducted. Break the class into small groups. Assign each group to a particular library database. Tell them to search the topic: "Does product

placement in TV shows, videos, movies, and video games improve sales?" or any other apropos topic.

Each group will email to the instructor's email account the first three results they get regardless of content, along with the search as it was entered in the library database. The instructor will retrieve these and display them on the projection unit to the class.

The class will discuss:

1. The appropriateness of the library database for the topic.
2. How effective the search was and what alternative searches might have been employed
3. The appropriateness of the three results to the topic, based on the citation and abstract.
4. The class will then suggest the most appropriate library databases
5. The best search strategy for that library database

The instructor will then conduct that search to retrieve satisfactory results based on the students' suggestions.

Conclude:

Module Three provided tools to better evaluate sources of information, so that new information could be incorporated not only with existing research, but also into the researcher's value system.

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Appendix A: Evaluating Paraphrases

Read the passage from former Harvard president Derek Bok's article, "College and the Well-Lived Life" (2010, February 5.)Then read the sample paraphrases of the passage. Decide if the paraphrase is acceptable and explain why.

STUDENTS COME TO UNIVERSITIES with a remarkably materialistic view of what a college education can provide. It was not always thus. In the 1960s, entering freshmen were chiefly interested in developing values and a meaningful philosophy of life. Only 40 percent felt that making "a lot of money" was a "very important" goal. By the mid-70s, their priorities were reversed. Making "a lot of money" was now "very important" to 75 percent of entering students.

Since then, making money has continued to be the pre-eminent reason for attending college. But much research has shown that people who set great store by becoming rich tend to be less happy than those who have other goals. If that is the case, most college freshmen are already on the wrong path to a full and satisfying life.

The widespread preoccupation with making money has clearly left its mark on the undergraduate curriculum. To compete for applicants, colleges have felt impelled to offer more vocational majors, and students have responded by gravitating increasingly to programs that prepare them for higher-paid jobs. Three-fifths of all undergraduates in four-year colleges are pursuing vocational majors. Even liberal-arts concentrators may seek majors that look suspiciously like pre-professional programs for Ph.D.'s and academic careers.

Paraphrase#1

Students come to colleges with a remarkably materialistic view of what an education can provide. It was not always this way. In the 1960s, freshmen were mostly interested in developing values and a meaningful philosophy of life. Only 40 percent felt that making "a lot of money" was a "very important" goal. By the mid-70s, students' priorities were reversed. Making "a lot of money" was now a "very important" goal to 75 percent of entering students.

Since then, making money has continued to be the pre-eminent reason for going to a university. But some research has shown that people who set great store by becoming rich are often less happy than those who have other goals. If that is the case, most college freshmen are on the wrong path to being happy.

The widespread interest in making money has clearly left its mark on the undergraduate curriculum. To compete for applicants, colleges offer more vocational majors, and students have responded by gravitating increasingly to programs that prepare them for higher-paying jobs. Three-fifths of all undergraduates in four-year colleges are pursuing vocational majors.

Is this paraphrase acceptable? Why or why not?

Paraphrase #2

Students entering colleges and universities supposedly come with a remarkably materialistic view of what a college education can provide. It was not always thus. In the 1960s, only 40 percent of freshmen felt that making "a lot of money" was a "very important." By the mid-70s, the figure went up to 75 percent. This is a perfectly good reason for going to a university or college. Making money will make you happier and better off. Colleges should make all of their majors vocational.

Is this paraphrase acceptable? Why or why not?

Paraphrase #3

In his article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Derek Bok observes that after the 1960s there was a shift in the reasons students went to college. Students used to be interested in creating a meaningful life philosophy, but now most are after the jobs paying the big bucks.

Is this paraphrase acceptable? Why or why not?

Answer Key: Evaluating Paraphrases

Example #1 is not acceptable. It too closely copies Bok's words.

Example #2 is not acceptable. It is briefer but offers too much commentary without acknowledging Bok's authorship.

Example #3 is acceptable. It acknowledges the author, though it does not provide a citation. It does capture the essence of the passage and is in the student's own voice.

Appendix B: Analyzing Results

In this exercise, you will utilize some of the skills you acquired in Modules 1 and 2 along with what we were just learning regarding summarizing.

You will locate an article from an academic /scholarly journal with references on your topic.

Once you have found one to your liking, save it as well as the citation & abstract.

After reading the article carefully:

- Compose an APA format citation for it using NoodleTools.
- Write a 100 word abstract summarizing the article
- In addition to the summary, examine the sources used in the article. Identify the primary, secondary, and tertiary (if any) sources used. *Overall*, how were the primary sources used by the author(s) to: review the scope of the research, examine new meaning, explain context, etc.? *Generally speaking*, how did the author incorporate secondary and tertiary sources in this article to: show how scholarship has advanced, build on the ideas of others, discuss the nature of research on the topic thus far, etc? Other things to consider in answering this question include: were the ideas quoted, paraphrased, or summarized? How were they used as evidence in the article?
- On your saved copy of the article, highlight or underline passages which you might want quote verbatim if you were writing a paper on this topic.

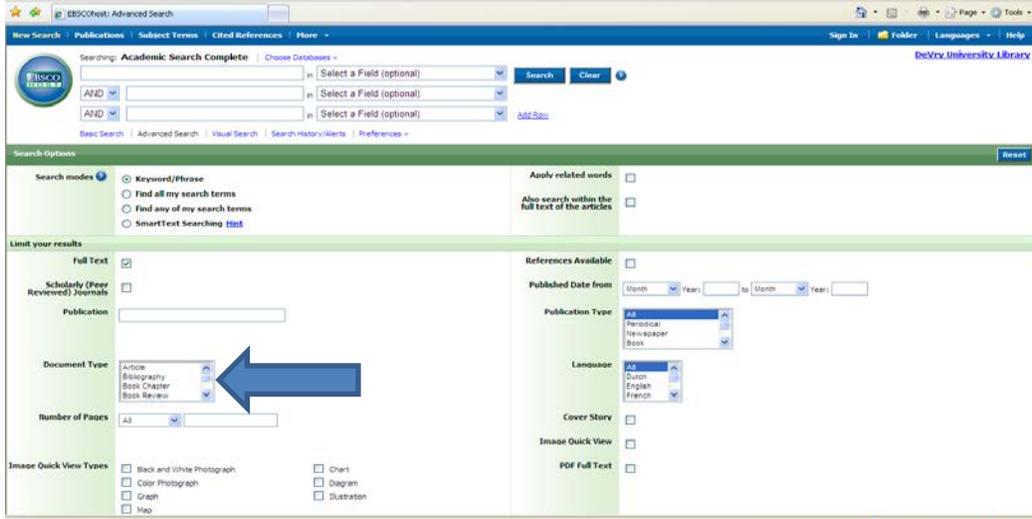
Appendix C: Background by Publisher

TYPE OF PUBLISHER	AFFILIATION	EDITORIAL PROCESS	REPUTATION	SCOPE	MARKET	EXAMPLES
University Presses	Private or public university	Peer-review process similar to scholarly journals	Highly regarded for being reliable and reputable	Specialized-- research oriented. Seek to bring forward new knowledge	Academics and educated lay readers	University of Chicago Press, University Press of Florida
Commercial Publishers	Commercial enterprise	In-house editors, may rely on outside readers	Often regarded as high quality	Varies widely from mass market best sellers to some specialized works	General readers of varying interests	St. Martins, Harper-Collins, Putnam
Textbook Publishers	Commercial enterprise	In-house editors, may rely on outside readers	Solid sources of tertiary information	Courses taught in educational institutions	Students and school districts	Thomson, Pearson, Glencoe
Reference Publishers	Commercial enterprise	In-house or contracted editors	Solid sources of tertiary information	Designed to summarize and provide access	Libraries	Reed, H. W. Wilson, Peterson's
Professional/ Trade Associations	Professional and trade organizations	In-house editors, may rely on outside readers	Well regarded sources of specialized information	Designed for professionals and scholars	Members , practitioners, and students of particular professions	American Management Association, American Society of Civil Engineers
Government Publications	Federal, state/ provincial, and local governments	In-house editors	Well regarded sources of specialized information	Matters pertaining to government and an informed citizenry.	The public	Government Printing Office (GPO), Bernan, ¹ Illinois Secretary Of State
Vanity And Subsidy Presses	Commercial enterprise-- publishes at the author's expense rather than relying on sales to make a profit.	None, unless paid for by the author	Low—many libraries refuse to buy from these firms as a matter of policy. Rarely produce best sellers.	Wide—publish on demand, so long as the content is not plagiarized, libelous, obscene, etc.	Limited— often these firms publish works declined by other publishers	Vantage, Dorrance, AuthorHouse

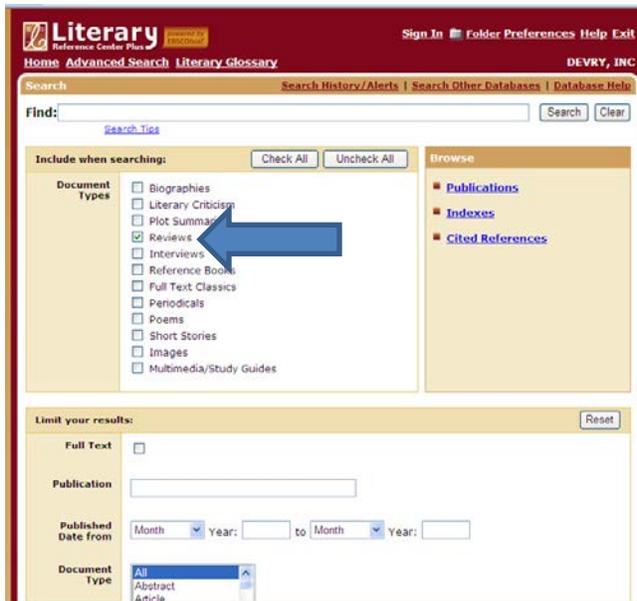
¹ Bernan publishes information the US government produces, but does not publish,

Appendix D: Instructions for EBSCOhost

EBSCOhost can search specifically for book reviews. By selecting this option from the initial “Search Options” screen, you will limit your results just to reviews if you enter the title or author of a book.



The Literary Reference Center Plus also has an option for searching for reviews in the Advance Search Mode. The *EBSCO Literary Reference Center* can also be used to find reviews, though most of the works are of a literary nature.



Appendix E: Assessing Book Reviews

Select a title in the DeVry catalog or another library related to the topic you are researching. Search for two book reviews and answer the following questions:

1. Overall, how does each reviewer approach the book? Do the reviews summarize the book, critique it, compare it to other works, etc?
2. What aspect of the book does each review focus upon?
3. Are the reviews reasonable and fair in their treatment of the book?
4. Do the reviews support their comments with quotations, outside material or other evidence?
5. Based on the reviews, do you think this book would be appropriate for your research?

Appendix F: Handout- Propaganda Posters

Glittering generalities are words or phrases loaded with emotion and desired to provoke an emotional, rather than logical, response. This poster does not indicate that some of the countries (Denmark, China, Belgium and Czechoslovakia) represented by the flags were occupied by the enemy. Nothing reveals the deep differences which existed between the Soviets and Americans, or that the Soviets supported the rebels who would overthrow the Chinese. This is hardly a united front—but it sounds and looks good! (see Figure 1)



http://scienceblogs.com/mikethemadbiologist/2007/08/superb_poster_exhibit_at_the_b.php
Figure 1

Name calling- can be literal name call or presenting an unflattering image of an opponent. Either way, it seeks to identify a person or person with a negative image. In this racist poster, the enemy is made out to be a repulsive bloody semi-human caricature (See Figure 2).

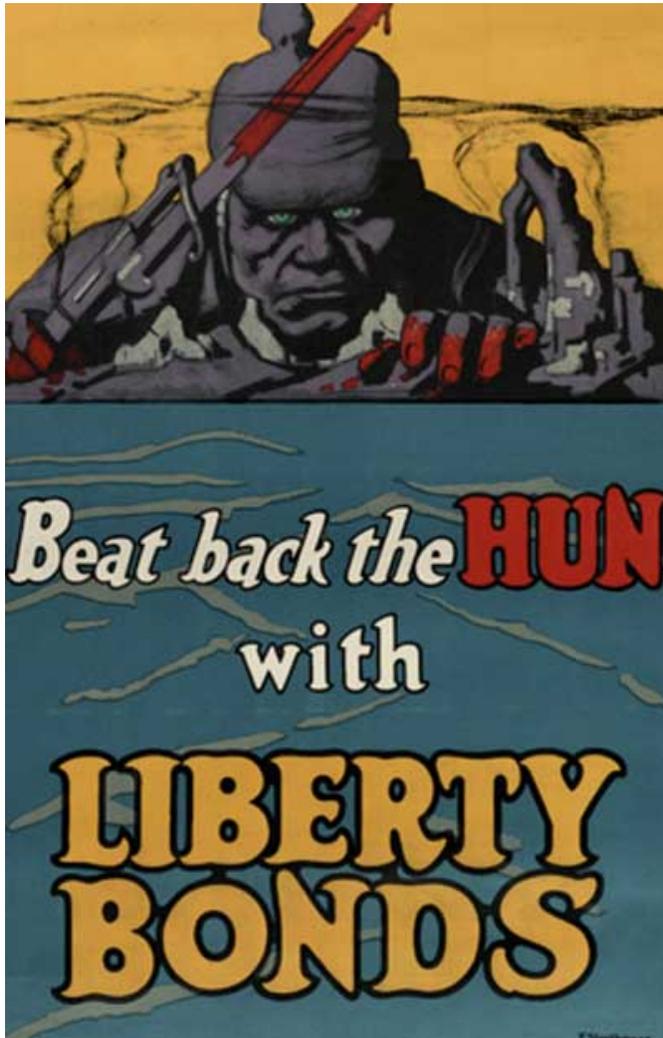


Figure 2 <http://www.propagandaposters.us/WWI/poster20.html>

Testimonials use the images and/or words of famous persons or experts to persuade you to do something. These are effective as people respond favorably to experts or celebrities—living or dead. WWII was fought just eighty years after the Civil War and still resonated strongly with many white southerners, even if Lee is shown in Union blue (see Figure 3).



Figure 3 http://www.vahistorical.org/lg/intro_poster.htm

Transfer often relies on imagery of something respected, revered, or honored to receive a positive response, possibly resulting in gained approval or support for a cause. In WWII, Stalin was astute enough to know most Russians would not fight to support Communism, but that they would resonate with powerful iconic images of “Mother Russia.” Here she declares “The Motherland is calling you!” (See Figure 4)



Figure 4 <http://www.allworldwars.com/Russian%20WWII%20Propaganda%20Posters.html>

The Bandwagon technique appeals to people's sense of wanting to belong to the winning side, and gives the impression of widespread support that one would certainly want to be part of. (See Figure 5).

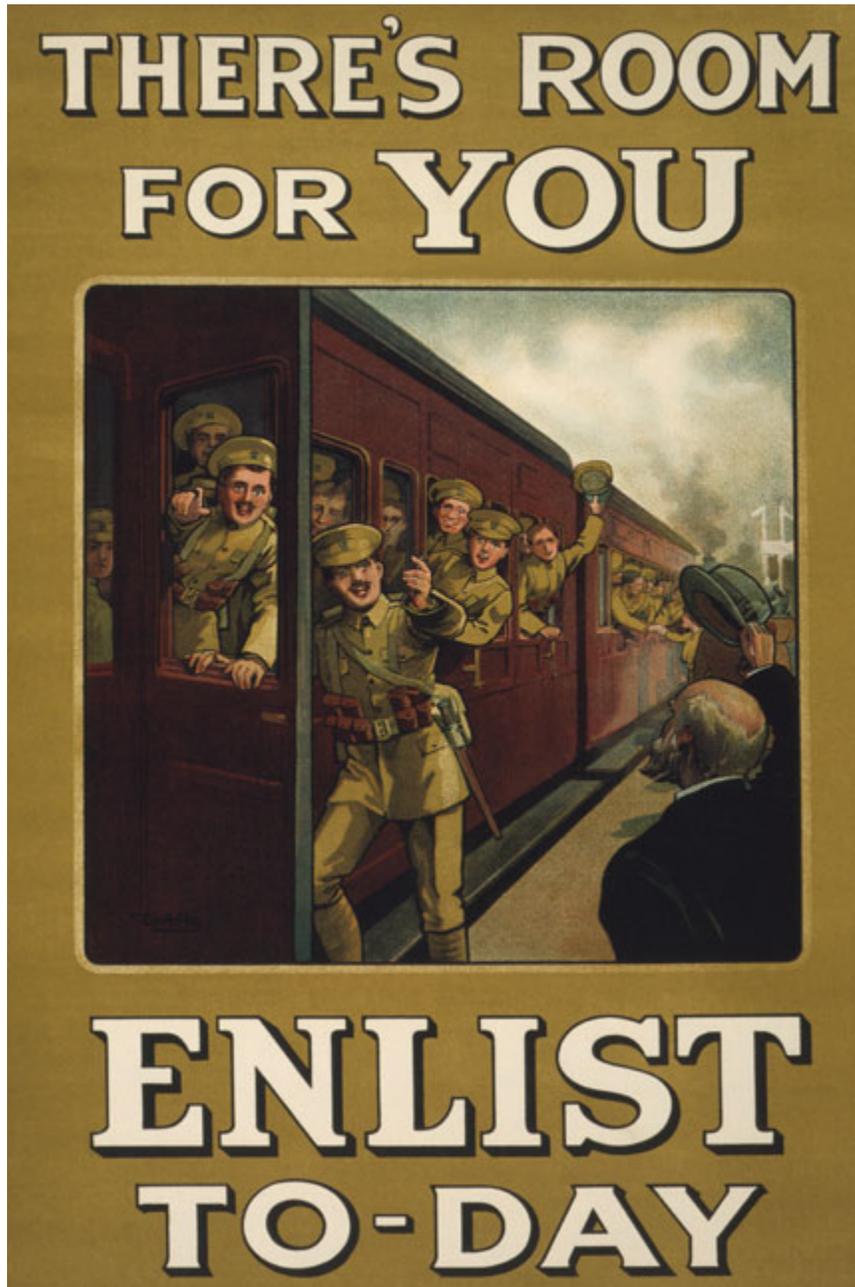


Figure 5 <http://www.photographersdirect.com/buyers/stockphoto.asp?imageid=716841>

The Plain Folks technique seeks to make people or ideas appear humble in origin, or suggest that ideas have strong grassroots support. In Figure 6, the late North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung is depicted as having that common touch while mingling among a group of farmers, all of whom he despised. This picture makes you believe that the common people of Korea would fully expect to die for him, and they probably unwillingly did.



유 화 《농민들속에서》 림릴, 송천형, 류재경
油画 《和农民在一起》 林烈、宋灿亨、柳在京

Figure 6 <http://www.dprkstudies.org/documents/nkpics/1pg092.html>

Card Stacking is often the most difficult technique to detect, and therefore is one of the most prevalent forms of propaganda. In this technique, the cards are stacked against the full and complete truth, as the presenter seeks to put her/his case in the best possible light and other side in the worst. This is a favorite approach for conspiracy theorists. The reasons for the deadly Allied air offensive against Germany's hardworking citizens in WWII are overlooked in this poster. The caption reads: "The enemy can see your lights! Blackout!" (See Figure 7)



Figure 7 <http://www.luftschutzbunker-wilhelmshaven.de/links/verweise.html>
Snow, N. (2003). *Information war: American propaganda, free speech and opinion control since 9/11*. Open media book. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Appendix G: Identifying Propaganda Techniques on the WWW

In this exercise, you will get a chance to apply some of what you learned about evaluation in examining two websites.

- A. Identify an advocacy website.
- B. Review the imagery and text and decide which of the seven propaganda techniques are being used. It is quite possible more than one may be used in combination with others.

The techniques are listed below for your convenience

1. Name Calling
2. Glittering Generalities
3. Transfer
4. Testimonial
5. Plain Folks
6. Bandwagon
7. Card Stacking

Site:

URL:

Answer the following questions:

1. Which of the propaganda techniques is employed by the site?
2. Explain in detail how the techniques are employed.
3. Do you think this is effective? Explain.
4. How are you responding emotionally to this site?
5. How are you responding intellectually to this site?
6. Go to one of the media measurement/web analytics sites (Quantcast, Alexa, Sitemeter, or one of your choosing). Based on the information you find at one of these sites, what conclusions can you draw about the audience for this site?

Now, find an advocacy site with an *opposing* perspective to the one you just viewed and answer the same questions.

Site:

URL:

1. Which of the propaganda techniques are employed by the site?
2. Explain in detail how the techniques are employed.
3. Do you think this is effective? Explain.

4. How are you responding emotionally to this site?
5. How are you responding intellectually to this site?
6. Go to one of the media measurement/web analytics sites (Quantcast, Alexa, Sitelogr, or one of your choosing). Based on the information you find at one of these sites, what conclusions can you draw about the audience for this site?

Appendix H: Analytic Websites Screenshots

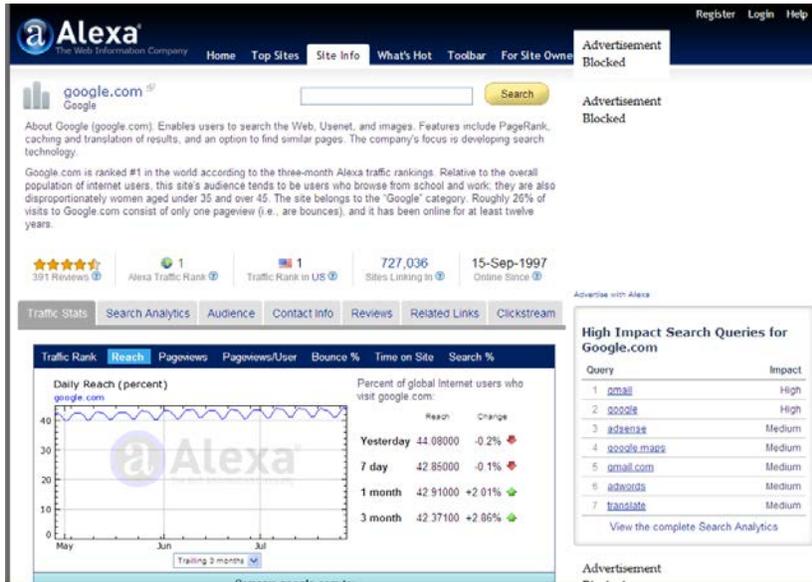


Figure 10 Alexa.com <http://www.alexa.com/>

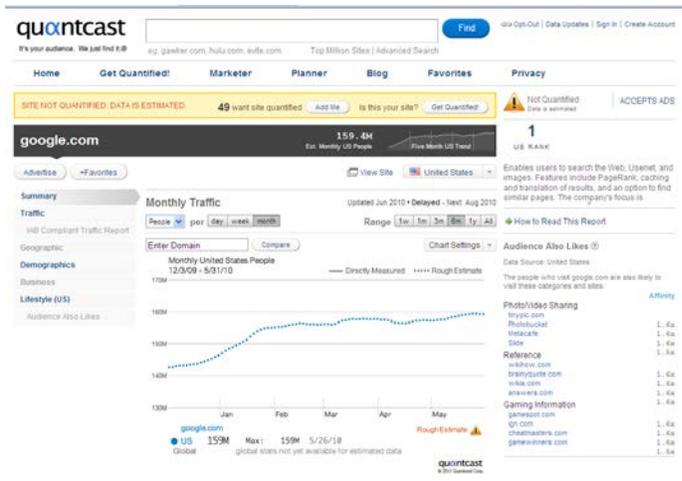


Figure 11 Quantcast <http://www.quantcast.com/>

Please enter a domain name without http://

example: google.com

Website Lookups Served: 760,191,221

Google.com This page was last updated 2 days ago. [Update Now](#)

Our Story About: Google.com

This is a sitelog about the domain Google.com. We estimate that Google.com makes 5609,470 USD per day and is worth about 5444,913,443 USD. We know the site is hosted in Mountain View (United States), has a Google Pagerank of 10, is active on the IP 209.85.225.103 and receives about 203,156,823 unique visitors per day. This domain is currently hosted at Google and the organization behind it is Google. Our database ranks this url at spot #1 and the current Alexa ranking is #1.

Domain:	google.com
World Rank:	#1
Estimate Value:	5444,913,443 USD
Estimate Income Per Day:	5609,470 USD
Estimate Visits Per Day:	203,156,823
Alexa Rank:	#1 visit alexa

60 tweets

Recen

- sentals.net
- rehdoggyvide
- tiffany-jewel
- champire.net
- kdo.com
- 1000bucksin3

Figure 12 Sitlogr <http://www.sitlogr.com/>

Appendix I: Aesthetics Overheads

The Haiti News Network (Figure 1) site is so busy it is difficult to tell what it is about or even how to navigate it.

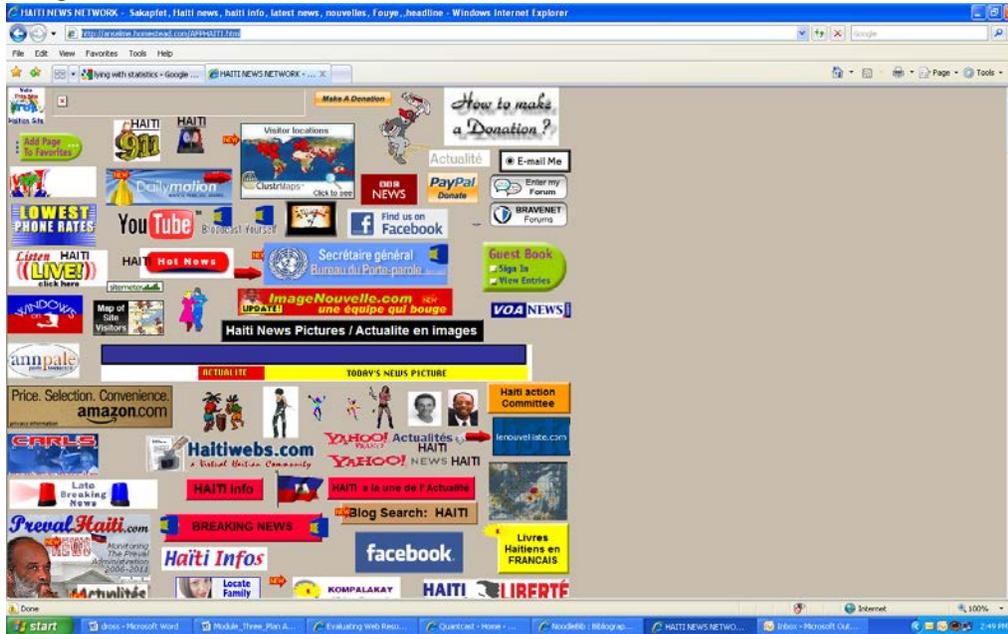
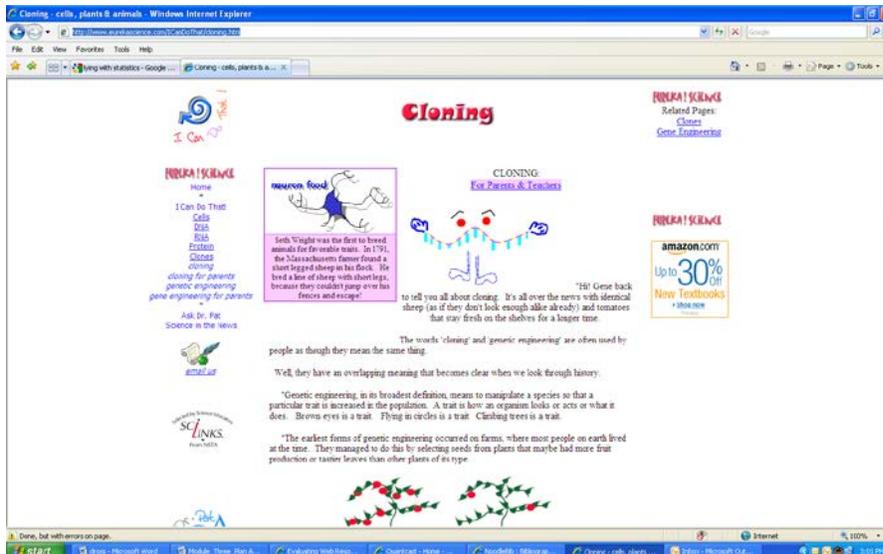


Figure 1 <http://anselme.homestead.com/AFP/HAITI.html>

Just looking at these two sites about cloning (Figures 2 & 3), which one looks “better”? Now, read the content and discuss which one is “better”?



(Figure 2) <http://www.eurekascience.com/ICanDoThat/cloning.htm>



(Figure 3) <http://www.d-b.net/dti/>

Appendix J: Deconstructing a Wikipedia Article

Go to Wikipedia and find an entry on your topic with “Notes” which have mostly active links. Read the entry and the notes and answer the following questions.

1. How many different sources are used in the Wikipedia entry? Given the nature of the entry, does this seem appropriate? Explain. Does the Wikipedia entry draw on a variety of sources to create new information?
2. How is the cited information used? A good way to think about this is to evaluate your entry in terms of Bloom’s Taxonomy.
 - a. Does it provide knowledge by seeking to define or describe a topic? How does it use the information cited to accomplish this?
 - b. Does it show comprehension by explaining or demonstrating understanding? How does it use the information cited to accomplish this?
 - c. Does it demonstrate application in explaining how the information can be applied or used? How does it use the information cited to accomplish this?
 - d. Is there analysis to classify, compare and contrast the topic of the entry with other concepts? How does it use the information cited to accomplish this?
 - e. Does it synthesize by constructing or creating new knowledge? How does it use the information cited to accomplish this?
 - f. Is the information in the entry used to create a new hypothesis or justify a new interpretation of a person, event, or idea? Does it evaluate the information it used to create the entry?
3. Are there elements of the Wikipedia entry which are not supported by the notes? Is the unsupported material common knowledge, or is it something that should have been cited? Where might the author of the Wikipedia entry have received the unsupported information?
4. How might the results of this activity differ if you were to similarly deconstruct a research article in a scholarly journal?
5. How well does the entry do in creating a new concept or concepts drawn from a variety of sources?
6. Construct a Concept Map to show how the sources interrelate to create the entry.

Appendix K: Research Annotations

Students will briefly annotate the resources they gather in the process of their research. These annotations will apply to not only the sources they include in the final paper, but the sources not included, but considered earlier.

Each annotation will consist of five components and need not consist of more than a few sentences so as to not make the activity overly burdensome.

Each annotation will provide:

1. a summary of the content
2. a statement regarding the relevancy of the source to the research topic
3. an evaluative statement on the source,
4. a reaction statement on how the student responds to the information in the source
5. an explanation on why the source was included or exclude from the final paper. (Hunt & Birks, 2008; Neely, Tallman, & Joyce; Birks, J., Hansen, C., Hunt, F., Martin, J., Sengati-Zimba, M., & Selbert, D).

Appendix L: Master List of Sites for Future Reference

Domain Names

.mil for military
.net for network
.org for not-for-profit entities
.com for commercial
.edu for educational

Newer Domain Names Include:

.biz for commercial entities
.coop for cooperatives
.museum
.aero for the air transport industry
.asia for companies, individuals and organizations in Asia, the Pacific, and Australia.
.info an open top level domain name to which anyone can register
.jobs--is for companies posting jobs for themselves, but not third parties
.name is another open domain name that anyone can use for themselves. Use of others' names can be challenged by a person with that name or the holder of the name of a fictional character.
.pro can be used by professionals, as engineers, accountants, lawyers, or physicians in the US, Canada, the UK, and France.
.tel is for internet communication services
.travel is reserved for companies in the travel and tourism trade.
.xxx is being proposed as a site for adult oriented sites

Book Reviews

There are many online sites that host their own reviews or link to a variety of review sources.

- The Book Page <http://www.bookpage.com/>
- All Readers <http://www.allreaders.com/>
- Meta Critic <http://www.metacritic.com/>
- The Lit Review <http://www.thelitreview.com/>
- Review of Books <http://www.reviewsofbooks.com/>
- We Read.com <http://wewread.com/>
- Good Reads <http://www.goodreads.com/>

Myth-busting Sites

The following can be helpful in verifying or disputing any of the rumors, hoaxes, urban legends and/or any of the other partial truths floating around cyber space.

- Snopes <http://www.snopes.com/>
- About.com Urban legends <http://urbanlegends.about.com/>
- FactCheck.org: A Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center <http://factcheck.org/>

- Truth or Fiction. Com <http://truthorfiction.com/>
- Skeptic's dictionary <http://skeptdic.com/tifraud.html>
- QuackWatch <http://www.quackwatch.com/>
- Museum of Hoaxes <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/>

Non-hoax sites

Demonstrate the evaluation techniques using any one or two of the sources listed below. These are all non-hoax sites falling in the truth is stranger than fiction

- Institute For Historical Review <http://www.ihr.org/> {A revisionist historical site}
- European Union Times <http://www.eutimes.net/> {A white supremacy site un-affiliated with the EU}
- The Faked Apollo Landings <http://www.ufos-aliens.co.uk/cosmicapollo.html>
- U.S. Silently Tortures Americans with Cell Tower Microwaves
<http://www.nowpublic.com/world/u-s-silently-tortures-americans-cell-tower-microwaves>
- US Green Card Lottery; <http://usagc.org/> {The layout is similar to the US State Department}
- Soy is making Kids Gay http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=53327
- Rochville University <http://www.affordabledegrees.com/> {diploma mill}
- Mike the Headless Chicken <http://www.miketheheadlesschicken.org/index.php> {appears to be a legitimate story!}
- International Federation of Competitive Eating <http://www.ifoce.com/> {gross, but true}
- What Happened to the Indians <http://e-student.net/inset19a.html> {Hints: Spanish conquest could not have ended at Chicago as the windy city was not founded at that time of the conquistadores; parts of North America were conquered by the Spanish—even if Mexico is not considered part of North America. Spain did conquer the territories the US took from Mexico at the end of the Mexican War including California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, to say nothing of Texas, and Florida}.

Hoax Sites:

<http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/sightings.html#dehydrated>
<http://www.sudftw.com/jackcon.htm>
<http://www.bigredhair.com/boilerplate/intro.html>
<http://zapatopi.net/afdb/>
<http://www.bandersnatch.com/guide.htm>
<http://descy.50megs.com/mankato/mankato.html>
<http://www.improb.com/airchives/classical/cat/cat.html>
<http://www.rythospital.com/2008/>
<http://www.dreamweaverstudios.com/moonbeam/moon.htm>

<http://www.chrissycaviar.com/ccaviar/infoFrameset.htm>
<http://www.buydehydratedwater.com/>
<http://www.rythospital.com/clyven/>
<http://zapatopi.net/bsa/>
<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/hierakonpolis/zombies.html>
<http://www.license.shorturl.com/>
<http://www.ladiesagainstwomen.com/index.html>