Teaching Students to Effectively Use the Internet

When it comes to using the Internet effectively, students must be prepared to do the following:

- Conduct research
- Evaluate information (think critically about the information they find)
- Use that information to make a decision

Source: http://dept.sccd.ctc.edu/tlc/resources/teach.html

Evaluating Information on the Internet: Not Everything on the Web is True!

Do you believe that everything you read is true? What about everything on the Internet? In a world where anyone can publish on the web, not all information is created equal. Much of the information you find on the Internet is reliable, accurate and true… but much of it is also biased, misleading and downright false.

Evaluating Information on the Internet: Not Everything on the Web is True!

In the real world, parents, friends, education and experiences help us develop the ability to determine fact from fiction truth from lie. In situations where the line between truth and lies are blurred, we have developed an internal toolbox of tips and techniques to make educated guess about what to believe.

Question:

If someone walks up to you and tells you an unbelievable story, what do you do to determine if it is true or not?

The Internet is a whole new ball game when it comes to information. As such we need to develop new toolboxes full of tips and techniques to determine if the information we are seeing on the Internet is true or false, reliable or unbelievable.

URL Extensions

.com represents the word "commercial," and is the most widely used extension in the world. Most businesses prefer a .com domain name because it is a highly recognized symbol for having a business presence on the Internet.

.net represents the word "network," and is most commonly used by Internet service providers, Web-hosting companies or other businesses that are directly involved in the infrastructure of the Internet. This is why "Dr. Bill Bailey.NET" is called ".NET" since we are a web site hosting service. Additionally, some businesses choose domain names with a .net extension for their intranet Websites.

.org represents the word "organization," and is primarily used by non-profit groups or trade associations. It is also used by Non-Profit ministries, and is very widely known and accepted.

.biz is used for small business Web sites.

.info is for credible resource Web sites and signifies a "resource" web site. It's the most popular extension beyond .com, .net and .org.

.mobi (short for "mobile") is reserved for Web sites built for easy viewing on mobile devices

.edu is reserved for educational institutions (schools) K-12 and colleges

.gov is reserved for local, state and federal government websites

When it comes to information on the web ask yourself the following questions…

- Who is the Author?
- What can you tell from the URL?
- What is the purpose of the web site?
- Is the site objective?
- Is this information accurate?
- Is the information reliable and credible?
- Is the information current?

Activities An excellent way to help students evaluate information on the web, is to give them several sites to look at and ask them to apply the criteria above.

Can you tell which of these web sites are real and which are not what they seem?

http://petsorfood.com/
http://www.buydehydratedwater.com/
http://www.umbachconsulting.com/miscellany/velcro.html
http://zapatopi.net/afdb/
http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/
"type martin luther king .org as URL with no spaces"
http://www.whitehouse.net/
http://www.whitehouse.gov

Demonstrate the importance of evaluating information by showing bogus sites and discussing potential dangers.

Brainstorm your own criteria for evaluating web sites

DANGER

Dihydrogen monoxide is colorless and odorless.

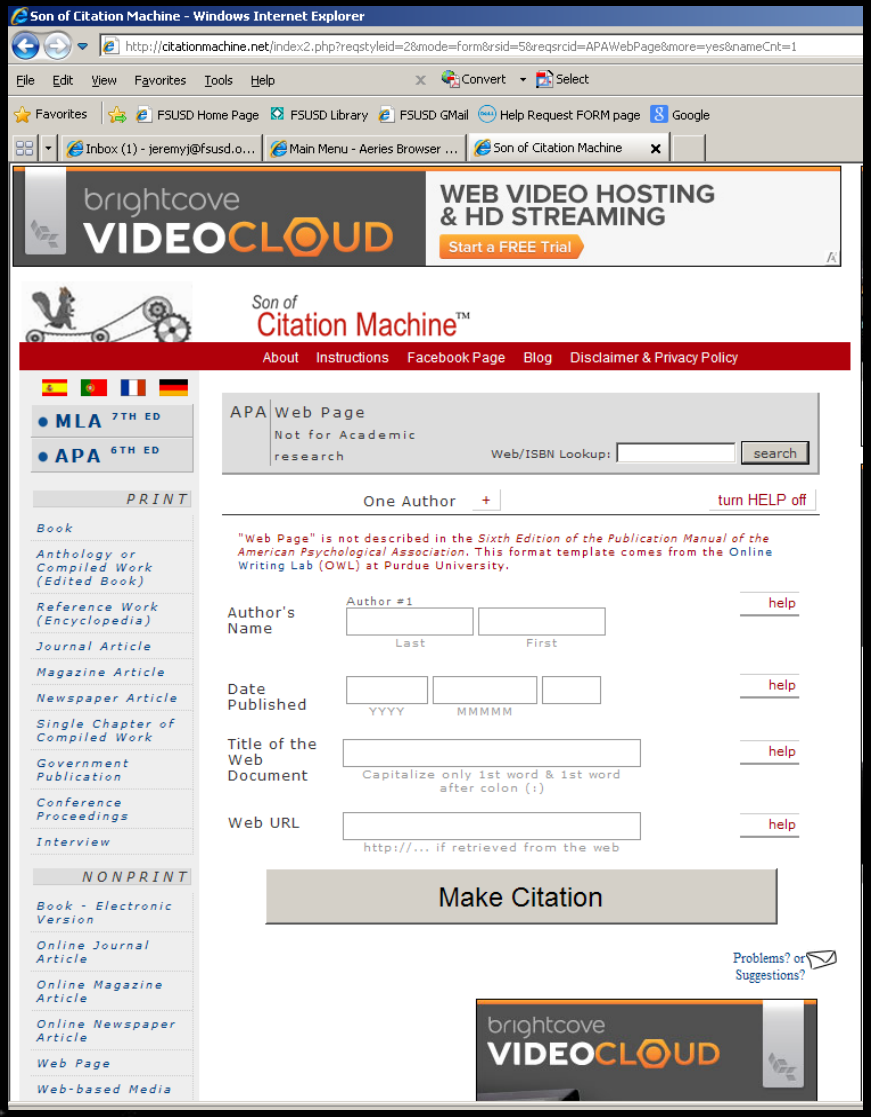
Accidental inhalation of DHMO may be fatal.

Prolonged exposure to its solid form causes severe tissue damage.

Symptoms of DHMO ingestion can include excessive sweating and urination, and possibly a bloated feeling, nausea, vomiting and body electrolyte imbalance.

http://www.dhmo.org

Search Engines

- What are they and how do they work?
- Do we cite “search engines”?

CitationMachine.net