Information Literacy Skills in a World of Google and Wikipedia

Emily Gover
EasyBib, New York, NY
WANTED:
Information Literacy Skills in a
World of Google and Wikipedia

Identifying Where Students Thrive
and Struggle with Information Literacy Skills

September 21, 2012
Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy
Who We Are, What We Do

Emily Gover
In-house Information Literacy Librarian

- Presented at Columbia University, AASL, SUNYLA, NYU’s Bobst Library, ISLMA 2012 (Oct.) Library 2.012 Global Conference (Oct.)

- Masters in Information Science from University at Albany

- Continues to work as a public librarian, has previous work experience at Berry College, Reader’s Digest and the University at Albany

EasyBib is an intuitive information literacy platform, with website evaluation, research, note taking and citation tools.
It has become a habit for many students to use popular websites for scholarly research.

Students continue to use these sites because they are easy to use and are familiar territory.
Plagiarism

2011 Pew Research study polled college presidents on the prevalence of plagiarism over the past decade.

- 55% reported an increase
- 40% noticed neither an increase nor decrease
- 2% noticed a decrease

Of those who noticed an increase, 89% "believe that computers and the internet have played a major role in this trend."

Plagiarism

Turnitin Study

Over 33,500,000 papers submitted

- 128 M content matches found
- 3.8 instances of plagiarism per paper
- 23.6 M matches 11.5 M matches to user-generated content sites in higher educational institutions (11.5 M in secondary)

The most plagiarized sites were...?
Plagiarism

Most Plagiarized Websites

#1

Wikipedia

Higher Ed. 10.74%

Secondary 7.99%

#2

Yahoo Answers

Higher Ed. 3.9%

Secondary 7.55%

High School to College Transition

Students are overly confident with research skills upon entering college.

Bad first research experience = less likely to use academic library resources in future.

Source: "Are They Ready? Exploring Student Information Literacy Skills in the Transition From Secondary to Tertiary Education."
Ask an "Expert"

2010 OCLC study of college students' use of electronic information sources found:

136% increase in use of “Ask an Expert” sites since 2005 (e.g., WikiAnswers)

In the study, only 10% of students used online library question services.

Ask an "Expert"

User-generated answer Q&A sites in a nutshell:

**How big is the specific ocean?**

- **Matt Piece**
  - 2 days ago

**Best Answer - Chosen by Asker**

- **Cody H**
  - can you be more pacific?
  - 1 day ago

👍 81 people rated this as good
College Library Web Site Use

2010 OCLC study of college students' use of electronic information sources found:

40% have never used their library's website

Of those who have not used it, 23% believe other websites have better information (!)

Students Use Google and Wikipedia for Research

Over 95% of college-level students use Google in course-related contexts (papers, projects)

85% use Wikipedia

Source: "How College Students Seek Information in the Digital Age," Project Information Literacy.
Areas of Improvement

Citation Recognition
• Only 23% successfully identified a journal article
• 13% understand which bibliographic elements are used to locate journal article in an OPAC

Referencing
• 25.4% did not understand the need to cite a source in instances other than direct quotes (i.e., paraphrasing, summarizing)
• 24% did not know when to cite a source at all

Journal Articles
• Over 45% did not know what credentials constituted a scholarly article

Source: "Are They Ready? Exploring Student Information Literacy Skills in the Transition From Secondary to Tertiary Education."
IL: Areas of Understanding

Boolean Operators

*Asked which sample queries would narrow results*
- One-third understood “AND” narrowed results
- Less than 10% believed “OR” would narrow results

Web Site Quality/Credibility

*Asked to identify three characteristics to consider*
- 23.8% identified all three
- 73.9% identified an answer with at least one

Source: "Are They Ready? Exploring Student Information Literacy Skills in the Transition From Secondary to Tertiary Education."
Analysis of Our Users

Which source types do they prefer?
What are they citing specifically?
Where are they struggling?
"Let's do the numbers..."

37,094,296

Number of students who used EasyBib over the past 12 months

We serve a wide range of students: middle school, high school, community colleges and four-year universities

Source: EasyBib data
"Let's do the numbers..."

Our most used citation formats:

50%  ???
15%  ???
6%   ???
2%   ???
2%   ???

Take a guess at our most cited formats

Source: EasyBib data
"Let's do the numbers..."

Our most used citation formats:

- 50% Web sites
- 15% Books
- 6% Journals
- 2% Newspapers
- 2% Photos
- 25% Other 54 types

Source: EasyBib data
Top 10 Online Sources Cited on EasyBib

10. The Washington Post
9. CNN
8. Answers.com
7. Time Magazine
6. Associated Content (Yahoo! Voices)
5. BBC News
4. JSTOR
3. YouTube
2. The New York Times

Can you guess what #1 is?

Source: EasyBib data
Top 10 Online Sources Cited on EasyBib

10. The Washington Post
9. CNN
8. Answers.com
7. Time Magazine
6. Associated Content (Yahoo! Voices)
5. BBC News
4. JSTOR
3. YouTube
2. The New York Times
1. Wikipedia

Source: EasyBib data
What We're Learning

Multimedia citations are increasing

Included in the top 10 source types:
- Photographs
- Digital images
- Films

In top 25 source types:
- Musical recordings
- Television

Source: EasyBib data
What We're Learning

Students struggle with attribution
Frequently cited web sites:

Google Images
Google
EasyBib (!)

Source: EasyBib data
Our Philosophy

EasyBib forms its tools and features based around what we learn from our users.

We analyze what they do, and find ways to make it easy, efficient, and effective.

Through analysis, we see where they're struggling, and strive to make the research process more manageable.
Works Cited


Thank you for your time!

If you would like to view this presentation online or learn more, please email Emily:

emily@imagineeasy.com