Just Google It-Bringing Students’ Information Literacy to the Composition Classroom

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Just Google It

Bringing Students’ Information Literacy to the Composition Classroom

Susanna Coleman
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Panel 34 – Saturday – 11:00-12:30
Introduction

• Students gain information literacy through daily digital activities:
  • Text messages – cell phones, AIM, ICQ, MSN
  • Search engines – Google, Yahoo
  • Wikis – Wikipedia, Wikia
  • Social networking – Facebook, MySpace
  • Virtual pet sites – Neopets, Subeta

• Teach students to locate, evaluate, and utilize information
Introduction

• May neglect these existing skills in the classroom

• Instead, help students transfer existing skills to research-based writing courses:
  • Text messaging leads to keywording
  • Searching the Internet leads to database searching
Text Messaging

Internet skill: text messaging

Information literacy skill: keywording

- Students text using as few words as possible
- Choose to include only most important words— the *keywords*
Text Messaging - Application

- Ask students to imagine “texting” research topic
- Words they choose to include are *keywords*
- Keywording = picking out words most important to topic
Text Messaging - Problems

- “Chat speak” abbreviations/alternate spellings
  - “u” for “you”
  - “thru” for “through”
  - “ppl” for “people,” etc.
- Remind students to avoid “shortcuts” when keywording
Web Searching

Internet skill: using search engines
Information literacy skill: searching databases

• Students already familiar with
  • Submitting a search query
  • Layout and elements found on database search pages
Web Searching

Advanced Search

Google Advanced Search

Find web pages that have...
- all these words:
- this exact wording or phrase:
- one or more of these words:

But don't show pages that have...
- any of these unwanted words:

Need more tools?
- Results per page:
- Language:
- File type:
- Search within a site or domain:

Topic-specific search engines from Google:
- Google Book Search
- Apple
- U.S. Government

Academic Search Premier

Search modes:
- Boolean/Phrase
- Find all my search terms
- Find any of my search terms
- SmartText

Apply related words
- Also search within the full text of the articles

Search Options
- Full Text
- Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals

Published Date from
- Month
- Year
- to
- Month
- Year

References Available
- Periodical
- Newspaper
- Book
Web Searching - Application

• Ask students to find song lyrics online using only title and artist
  • Query will consist of song title, artist, and “lyrics”: *viva la vida, coldplay, and lyrics*
  • *Work, author, topic* strategy also works for academic searches:
    • *inconvenient truth, gore, and climate change*
    • *everyday use, walker, and theme*
Web Searching - Problems

• Boolean operators no longer used in search engines
  • Instruct students how to duplicate internet search queries with operators:
    • Google query: inconvenient truth gore climate change
    • Database query: “inconvenient truth” AND gore AND “climate change”

• Differences among database layouts
Web Searching - Problems
Conclusion

• Most curricular information literacy skills have extracurricular equivalent
• Explain skills in terms of equivalents to help students understand how to locate, evaluate, and use information