Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy

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Oct 4th, 11:00 AM - 12:45 PM

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
Auburn University Montgomery
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

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:

Google Book Search, Apple, U.S. Government

EBSCOhost Advanced Search

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

Search History/Alerts, Preferences

Limit your results
- Full Text
- Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals

References Available
- Published Date from

Publication, Publication Type

Select a Field (optional)

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