

East Los Angeles College Library

Credible Sources on the Web—Outline

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: Students will be able to effectively identify credible sources on the web

SLO 2: Students will be able to recognize key elements of URLs and use them to locate credible websites

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Bring to class:

- Copies of the “Find Credible Sources on the Web” handout
- Roster
- Attendance verification forms
- Date stamp

1. Introductions—**Give email address in case they have questions that come up later**
2. Tell students the objectives for this workshop: To teach them about tools and techniques that they’ll be able to use in order to find sources on the web that their instructors might allow them to use for their papers
3. Tell them that they always have to check with their instructors first to make sure that they are allowed to use any web site.
4. The first section of the workshop has to do with critical thinking about web sources, and evaluation criteria. Ask students what criteria they consider when they have found a few books at the library and are trying to decide which one to use. Write their answers on the board. Make sure they come up with at least AAOCC:
 - Authority (who’s the author)
 - Accuracy (validity, reliability)
 - Objectivity (bias)
 - Currency (timeliness)
 - Content (scope)
5. Discuss how we consider these criteria with books, but with books we already can feel kind of safe because of the information cycle. Is the same true with the web? So we need to pay extra attention to the same criteria when it comes to web sites.
6. Have students look at a pair of web sites on their handouts (Exercise 1). Give them 12 minutes to use the above criteria to figure out if they’d use the site for a paper or not. **Walk around and answer questions (you really need to help them out with the evaluation criteria so they don’t get confused—make sure they understand what they’re supposed to do with the exercise—make sure they understand what the criteria mean and how they’re supposed to apply them to a web site).**
7. 5 minutes to discuss what students found. Ask for volunteers and give them control of the computer to demonstrate.
8. Ask students when they use the web for research, how they do it.

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9. They'll probably say they use Google. Tell them Google is a really great tool, and we're going to learn how to use it to find the good stuff. But there are also other great tools which we'll learn about.
10. Open Google and perform a search to demonstrate how you can focus your search. Say you want to find a paper about Shakespeare and Hamlet as they relate to movies (use To Be or Not to Be):
 - Do the search without quotes→look at the # of results
 - Do the search with quotes→look at the # of results
 - Add more words (hamlet, movie)--does this bring back more results or less? Why? →look at the # of results
 - Now show the “Advanced Search” feature
 - Show the different ways to limit a search, especially by language, format, and last updated
 - **More about domains. Talk about how usually in academic research the .edu and .gov domains are more reliable than others. Talk about why this is so. Tell them that even though these are more reliable than .com, still they can't automatically decide that it's a good site. They still have to think about the information in the site.**
 - Limit your search to the .edu domain→look at the # of results
 - Limit your search further to the PDF format→look at the # of results
11. So we have narrowed our search from 2,350,000,000 to 149 hits. Form now on there is no reason why students have to put up with a huge list of results with lots of irrelevant hits.
12. **Exercise 2**--Give students 6 minutes to use advanced search techniques on Google to find a good web site on their topic. Tell them to use the evaluation criteria we just learned to help them decide if this is a site they'll use for their paper. Have them fill out the info on their handouts. Walk around and help them and answer any questions.
13. Tell students that as good as Google is, there are problems in using it. (use “miserable failure” as an example) Talk about Google bombing and spam indexing.
14. So we have other tools to use: Subject directories and Gateways. Tell them a little about these tools (e.g., how the list of materials is put together by human beings, not computers. So people who put these lists together use their judgment to decide if the materials they include are credible or not, etc.)

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15. Introduce the following 3 sites:
 - Librarian's Internet Index <http://lii.org/>
 - Infomine <http://infomine.ucr.edu/>
 - Open Directory Project <http://dmoz.org/>
16. Show a sample search using one of the above directories to show students how to use these tools. (Try searching for Hamlet Movies (in ODP)→look at the # of results. Are there more or less results than we found using Google. Why?)
17. **Exercise 3**--Give students 9 minutes to use one of the above directories to find a good web site on their topic. Tell them to use the evaluation criteria we just learned to help them decide if this is a site they'll use for their paper. Have them fill out the info on their handouts. Walk around and help them and answer any questions.
18. If there is time, have students demo what they did and what they found.
19. Have students tear of the exercise sheet from their handout and collect these as they leave.