

As educators, we all have developed knowledge and skills to create, find, evaluate and critique information in print-based media. The expertise we have developed in dealing with print media does not always readily transfer to our understanding of web-based information. This session is designed to raise questions and introduce tools and practices that can make us – and our students - more productive users of the Internet.

By the end of this session you should:

- Be able to explain the basic process by which a search engine, like Google, generates search results
- Be able to use a range of tools and practices for determining the authenticity and authority of information on the web (media literacy skills).
- Understand that the web is a dynamically changing space, and that there is an historical archive that can be reviewed.
- Begin to consider ways to integrate media literacy skills into your courses.

### Guiding Questions

- In general, how does a search engine like Google return search results? Is it important to know this?
- How do you find the owner or publisher of a Web site?
- What information in a Web address might give clues about the type of organization or entity that owns and publishes the domain?
- What tools help us to evaluate the authority of information on a Web site?
- If the Web is a dynamically unfolding and changing space, how do we examine the history and development of a Web site?

### Session Activities

#### 1) Understanding Google search returns

- Conduct the “vanity” search.
- Managing your online identity?
- Exploring Google page rank
- Additional examples

2) Exploring ownership and authorship

- Search for Martin Luther King Jr.
- <http://www.easywhois.com>

3) Peer Review and Authority of Content

- The case of Wikipedia
- Alan Sokol <http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/>

4) What information in a Web address might give clues about the type of organization or entity that owns and publishes the domain?

What can we determine about the content of a web page simply from the URL?

- <http://pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/di/intro.html>

Some common domain extensions

.edu	Educational organization (most US universities)
.k12	US school site (not all US schools use this)
.ac	Academic institution (outside of US)
.sch	School site (some schools outside of the US use this)
.com	Company (usually .co in the UK)
.org	Any organization
.gov	Government agency
.net	Network
.mil	Military institution

Some extensions may provide more reliable information than others, but there are no guarantees. Ones that may be more reliable are .edu, .gov, .k12. Ones to watch out for are .com, .org, .net, .us. These domains can be purchased by anybody.

Listing of other domain names from NetLingo

<http://www.netlingo.com/word/domain-name.php>

4) How do we examine the history and development of a Web site?

- Internet Archive Wayback Machine <http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>
- <http://pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/di/intro.html>

5) Validate the authenticity of information on a web page

- Difference between forward and external links
- Forward=visible, External=invisible

- <http://www.rythospital.com/clyven/>

## Notes