Finding the right pieces for your Info Puzzle
A Guide to Internet Searching

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Subject Guides give you the 'edge pieces' and fill in blocks of colour
- use them to find information on general topics, like *native studies*, or *math games*.

Search Engines fill in the tiny details
- use them to find something very specific, like *habitat destruction and songbirds* or *Alberta pioneers*

Subject Guides

3 Super "Department Store"
Yahoo - http://www.yahoo.com
Yahooligans - http://www.yahooligans.com
Miningco - http://www.miningco.com

2 Fabulous lists of "Boutiques"
Argus Clearinghouse - http://www.clearinghouse.net/
WWW Virtual Library - http://vlib.stanford.edu/Overview.html

- A perfect example of a boutique subject guide is David Brown's Children's Literature Web Guide at http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/

3 Terrific local resources
Calgary Public Library - http://public-library.calgary.ab.ca/link/hompg1.htm
MRU Library Subject Webliographies
- http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/library/Subguide/index.htm
TELUS Learning Connection - http://www.2learn.ca

Search Engines

3 L's of effective searching

Language - *Use specific terms, appropriate terminology for best results. Searching by phrases can be useful, as can paying attention to Capital Letters.*
Limiting - *Limit Searching to the title field or by using Alta Vista Canada (www.altavistacanada.com) to limit to Canadian resources*
Logic - *Read the help files to determine how to translate Search logic into the particular dialect of the tool you're using - e.g. Boolean, +'s and -'s, "all/any of these terms", etc*

1 Great Canadian Search Engine

Alta Vista Canada - http://www.altavista.ca

- For both Alta Vistas, the following rules apply:
    - " " go around phrases or names,
    - * means I don't care how this word ends
    - + goes before terms that must be present
    - - goes before things that must not be present
    - limit by type of site by using +domain:edu or +domain:org
    - reduce results by searching only in title - e.g. title:"Tyrannosaurus rex"
        - e.g. +"Machu Pichu" +archeol* -aliens +domain:edu

3 More Wonderful Search Engines

Alta Vista - http://www.altavista.com
Hotbot - http://www.hotbot.com
Northern Light - http://www.northernlight.com/

Teaching Searching

Please send in ideas to add to the list!

Teach students - teach teachers - teach parents!!! - teach anyone who'll come - it's a great marketing tool!

3 Key Points

Teach searching as a means, not an end

- If searching is only a part of the process it is easier to teach other things like evaluation

Teach evaluation as part of the process: search then Research

- Ask students to determine if the sites they're finding tell them what they need to know and what they still need to find - in searching, as in life, refinement is everything!

Map searching to a familiar activity - shopping, fishing, selecting a chocolate, etc

- Set up boolean groups based on clothing - jeans and white shirts or pink shoes

Use the Internet where it makes most sense:

- Current events
- International perspectives
- Communication

Ideas for effective teaching: (we'll work on this together!)

Web reports and webliographies
Transfer the book report to a new medium. Students can get used to looking for useful elements,(author, date, url) and to evaluating sites. Web reports can grow into a class webliography on a given subject (either after searching or by using 'safe'starting points like the Yahooligans list on Dinosaurs). Students could also build a webliography on not-so-academic subjects - comics, bikes, cars, whatever to be used by their fellow students. Think about publishing the webliographies - on the web, on posters, a binder beside the Internet station or best of all in the newsletter. (Does your school newsletter go to trustees and local politicians?)

Use the news!
Use a source that lists newspapers by country, like The Ultimate Collection of Newslinks (http://pppp.net/links/news/), to encourage your students to access daily news from a country they're studying.

Go global!
Use sources from the news list or other resources for foreign language and viewpoints; There's a great page called Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections at http://www.iecc.org/.

Find experts!
There are a number of sites on the web where students can find people to email - whether about a health issue or through pages like Great Canadian Scientists' Ask a Scientist Page (http://fas.sfu.ca/css/gcs/ask/). These folks are supported by the Royal Society of Canada and Canada's Schoolnet (http://www.schoolnet.ca/

Assignments I've used:

- Information on the Economics 3303 Assignment where students wrote web reviews
- ECON 2203 - a web analysis project on the federal budget http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/programs/academserv/lib/Help/Helpdocs/ECON2203.htm
- ECON 3303 - annotated webliography project http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/programs/academserv/lib/Help/Helpdocs/econ3303.htm
- Evaluation Pie charts - I have used this with a number of classes. I talk about sites being there for information, persuasion or advertising, or a combination of all three. Students search, and for a site they've found draw a pie chart of the site. Students are asked to

come up and draw the chart on the board. I'm hoping to try this with pre-chosen sites perhaps 5 for a class of 25, so that students could debate differing interpretations of a site.

- The 'secret information' assignment on website evaluation http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/programs/academserv/lib/Help/Helpdocs/admn1150 a.htm - described in the article I wrote for Teacher Librarian Today - Evaluating Internet Information.

Internet Evaluation

3 most important Questions
Who is responsible? *An organization, an individual? Are there credentials listed?*
When was the site posted or last updated?
Why is the site there - *to inform? persuade? advertise?*

Other clues
What does the address tell you - edu, gov, org **vs** net or com.
BUT…
How did you find it - linked from a good page?

- *Hint: in Alta Vista search link:http://address to find out who links to a page*

More on Searching

- Search Engine Watch
  - http://www.searchenginewatch.com/
- Internet Trend Watch for Libraries
  - http://www.itwfl.com/
- Scout Report
  - http://wwwscout.cs.wisc.edu/scout/report/index.html
- Internet Resources Newsletter
  - http://www.hw.ac.uk/libWWW/irn/irn.html
- Evaluating Web Resources
  - http://www.science.widener.edu/~withers/webeval.htm

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