

Searching and evaluating the web



NOTE All of the links for this activity are available at: <http://www.digitalwriting.org/search.html>

GETTING STARTED

You need not prepare anything formal, but—as you work through the activities below—take notes and be ready to share and talk.

We will, as a large group:

- share tags (4c below)
- discuss advice (12 below)

SEARCHING THE WEB

1. Head to **Bing** (www.bing.com).
 - a. In the search box, type in **digital humanities** and click on the FIND button. How many matches did you get?

Link to a couple of the sites in the search results list. Do they seem to be appropriate to this class? To your search?
 - b. Return to the front page of Bing. In the search box, type in "**digital humanities**" (with quotation marks) and click on the FIND button. How many matches did you get?

Link to a couple of the sites in the search results list. Can you estimate—by looking at the first 30 or so hits—how many are educational (.edu), organizational (.org), and/or corporate (.com)?
 - c. Can you explain the difference in the *number* of search results between search 1a and search 1b?

Can you explain the difference in the *content* of search results between search 1a and search 1b?
2. Experiment with another search site. Leave the browser window with Bing open, but open a new browser tab or window. In the new browser tab or window, head to **Google** (www.google.com). First, do the same searches you did on Bing.
 - a. In the search box, type in **digital humanities** and click on the “Google Search” button. How many matches did you get?

Link to a couple of the sites in the search results list. Do they seem to be appropriate to this class? To your search?

- b. Return to the front page of Google. In the search box, type in "**digital humanities**" (with quotation marks) and click on the "Google Search" button. How many matches did you get?

Link to a couple of the sites in the search results list. Can you estimate—by looking at the first 30 or so hits—how many are educational (.edu), organizational (.org), and/or corporate (.com)?

- c. Can you explain the difference in the *number* of search results between search 2a and search 2b?

Can you explain the difference in the *content* of search results between search 2a and search 2b?

- d. Can you explain the difference between Bing and Google in the *number* of search results between search 1b and search 2b?

Can you explain the difference between Bing and Google in the *content* of search results between search 1b and search 2b?

3. Experiment with doing smart searches. Head to **Yahoo!** (www.yahoo.com). Once you connect, look for a "Help" button on the Yahoo! front page. Click on it.

- a. What different types of help and/or support does Yahoo! offer users?

- b. Look specifically for help searching Yahoo! What is one piece of advice Yahoo! offers to its users regarding doing searches?

4. Experiment with a social-network-oriented image site: **Flickr**.

- a. In the search box, type in **digital literacy** and search. How many matches did you get?

- b. Explore some of the matches. What sorts of other tags are associated to the matches? Can you create any associations between or across the different tags?

- c. **Head to the three tagging images on the web page; choose one of the three, and create a set of tags you would use to describe the image (bear in mind the uses and contexts of tags—viewers will use these tags to search for, find, and mentally categorize images).**



NOTE

del.icio.us has a helpful tagging overview page you might want to check out: delicious.com/help/faq#tags

EVALUATING WEB SITES

5. Which of the sites is the *real* Web site of the United States White House? How do you know?

www.whitehouse.net
www.whitehouse.gov
www.whitehouse.com
www.whitehouse.org

6. Which of the sites is a *real* company? How do you know?

www.huhcorp.com
www.despair.com

7. Which of the sites is a *real* report? How do you know?

home.inreach.com/kumbach/velcro.html
www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/bw1103.pdf

8. Which sites is a *real* company/corporate site? How do you know?

www.genochoice.com
www.identigen.com

9. Which of these is a real news story? How do you know?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsqjM9AEqIU
www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7D5QZS1Ldo

10. Which of these is a real video? How do you know?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsqjM9AEqIU
www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7D5QZS1Ldo

11. **What are three pieces of advice you have for people conducting research on the web and trying to assess the validity and credibility of web sites and web content?**