Web Detective: Fact vs. Fiction

WebQuest Description: Students develop, test, and publish a Website Evaluation Guide on the web.

Grade Level: 6-8
Curriculum: Art / Music

Keywords: website evaluation, resource evaluation, information skills, information literacy, inquiry, research

Published On: 2008-08-05 17:42:49
Last Modified: 2008-08-05 17:34:22
WebQuest URL: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=15290

Introduction

Web Detective: Fact vs. Fiction

Deciding what information to believe is a skill that you use everyday. You receive a lot of information from family, friends, acquaintances, teachers, as well as radio, TV, etc. - Did you hear that? - we are going to have to wear purple shoes in P.E.? Oh my gosh, the math test is tomorrow! There is a storm heading towards North Carolina! School will be cancelled tomorrow! I heard that Ms. Fuzzyhead died her hair pink! These new baked Cheetos(TM) are the best! How do you decide what to believe? Does it matter who tells you? Why? What are some other factors that you use to separate fact from fiction? How do you know if something you read, hear, or watch on the Internet is true? Some of the same factors that you use in deciding who to believe are the same factors you can use in deciding what to believe on the Internet. In this WebQuest, you will be formalizing a set of guidelines for you and your classmates to use to decide whether a website is a good resource - that is, to determine whether the website is believable.

Tasks

Web Detective: Fact vs. Fiction

You are a member of a famous web detective agency with special skills that allow you to determine fact from fiction on the Internet. You are competing with other top web detective agencies to develop a streamlined and easy-to-use Web Detective Guide to help others more easily evaluate websites. You and your fellow agency detectives will review current website evaluation criteria from several sources. Then, your agency will decide which evaluation criteria are the most important in deciding whether a website is believable. These criteria are to be organized into the detective-friendly categories of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW. You will have some websites (some good, some bad) upon which to test your selected criteria. This testing may cause you to make adjustments to your guidelines before you create your final product. After your testing, and when your agency is in agreement about your evaluation criteria, you will create a Web Detective Guide in a class wiki. This guide can then be used by anyone on the Internet interested in making sure they can believe a particular website. The competing detective agencies will meet to discuss which Web Detective Guide will become the official guide of web detective agencies around the world. The most important factor will be the ability to discriminate "trustworthy" websites from "untrustworthy" websites using the guidelines, but it is also important for the guidelines to be straightforward and easy to use.

Process

Web Detective: Fact vs. Fiction

1. First, briefly meet with your fellow agency detectives to decide the following:

   A. What is the name of your detective agency?
   B. Plan who is going to read which resources (below).
   C. You may want to split up the reading for wider coverage, or you may want to have some overlap in your reading for common ground in your group.
   D. Each person should read at least 2 of the resources about website evaluation (below).

   As you are reading, use the provided graphical organizer of categories (WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW) to keep a list of the information to look for and questions to ponder. These are the evaluation criteria. Note it's importance and it's frequency of mention.

   For example, the question "Who is the author of the website?" belongs in the WHO category. For more information, click on "Process".
Ask http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html
3. After each detective in your agency has completed their reading and created an initial list of criteria, meet to discuss your findings.- What criteria (questions and information to look for) do you have in common?- Which of these do you think are most important?- Create a master list for your agency organized by the categories (WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW) on a new organizer note sheet (provided).&nbsp; You do not have to have all the categories represented, but you should have at least three (3) categories represented.&nbsp; &nbsp;Remember that in addition to being able to distinguish trustworthy websites, the guide should be streamlined and easy to use.&nbsp; This means it should be well organized by category, and use easy-to-read language.&nbsp;&nbsp;4. &nbsp;Test your master list against a few of the following websites.&nbsp; Are you able to tell which ones are good and reliable?&nbsp; Hint: Some of them are not!!&nbsp; Use the web evaluation test summary sheet (provided) to help you keep track of your testing and your results.&nbsp; As you are testing, feel free to make modifications to your master list!&nbsp; http://www.whitehouse.gov/http://www.whitehouse.org/http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/&nbsp;http://www.npca.org/marine_ana&amp;nbsp;coastal_marine_wildlife/octopus.htmlhttp://www.hp-lexicon.org/http://www.jkrowling.com/http://www.nbcolympics.com/http://olympic.org/http://www.smokingsection.com/issues1.html#smokehttp://www.who.int/docstore/tobacco/ntday/ntday96/pk96_3.htmhttp://www.pinknoiz.com/coldwar/index.htmlhttp://www.fair.org/index.php?page=101nbsp;5. When your agency is satisfied with your master list and its performance on the test websites, enter your finalized Website Evaluation Guideline into the class wiki (http://webdetectivesample.pbwiki.com).&nbsp; After all the agencies’ guidelines are entered, we will have a full class discussion to determine the “preferred” (“starred”) guideline to post on the main page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are grouped into the categories of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and/or HOW.</td>
<td>There is little grouping and/or the grouping is illogical and/or the criteria are hard to understand.</td>
<td>Some of the grouping does not make sense and/or the criteria use unfamiliar words.</td>
<td>The groupings make sense; the criteria are straightforward and use everyday language of the students.</td>
<td>%20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are concise.</td>
<td>The criteria are somewhat incoherent or rambling.</td>
<td>The criteria are thorough, but it they are overwhelming to read and digest.</td>
<td>The criteria are short, but thorough. They serve well as a quick reminder of things to check.</td>
<td>%10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are grouped logically and easy to understand.</td>
<td>The criteria are grouped into 2 categories.</td>
<td>Criteria are grouped into 3 or more categories.</td>
<td></td>
<td>%30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating trustworthy websites</td>
<td>The group has some criteria listed, but the criteria are ineffective in discriminating the test websites.</td>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating only the most obvious “prank” test websites.</td>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating most or all of the “test” websites.</td>
<td>%40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria are listed, but only 1 category is represented (or criteria are uncategorized)</td>
<td>The group’s criteria are grouped into the categories of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and/or HOW.</td>
<td>Criteria are grouped into the categories of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and/or HOW.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are grouped logically and easy to understand.</td>
<td>There is little grouping and/or the grouping is illogical and/or the criteria are hard to understand.</td>
<td>Some of the grouping does not make sense and/or the criteria use unfamiliar words.</td>
<td>The groupings make sense; the criteria are straightforward and use everyday language of the students.</td>
<td>%20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are concise.</td>
<td>The criteria are somewhat incoherent or rambling.</td>
<td>The criteria are thorough, but it they are overwhelming to read and digest.</td>
<td>The criteria are short, but thorough. They serve well as a quick reminder of things to check.</td>
<td>%10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are grouped logically and easy to understand.</td>
<td>The criteria are grouped into 2 categories.</td>
<td>Criteria are grouped into 3 or more categories.</td>
<td></td>
<td>%30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating trustworthy websites</td>
<td>The group has some criteria listed, but the criteria are ineffective in discriminating the test websites.</td>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating only the most obvious “prank” test websites.</td>
<td>The group’s criteria are effective in discriminating most or all of the “test” websites.</td>
<td>%40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Score %100

Conclusion

Web Detective: Fact or Fiction? Congratulations!&nbsp;By &nbsp;working&nbsp;with your fellow agency detectives and completing the challenge of this WebQuest, you have improved your skills as a top-notch web detective.&nbsp; You now know key questions to ask or considerations to ponder to determine the trustworthiness of a website.&nbsp; Remember, you can always refer to our class wiki to remind yourself of criteria to use in website evaluation!&nbsp; http://webdetectivesample.pbwiki.com/

Teacher Page

Web Detective: Fact or Fiction?&nbsp;Focus: The focus of this WebQuest is to become familiar with the evaluation process necessary for using the Internet as a resource.&nbsp; By reviewing a number of existing evaluation guides, the students should gain insight into this inexact process. &nbsp;Synthesizing the information from multiple documents, the students will generate a set of the most important guidelines in their own words.&nbsp; This newly generated guideline can be used as a personal reference for future web inquiry.&nbsp; The student’s final product, the Web Evaluation Guide, is posted on the web for easy access and referral anytime the student is on the Internet.&nbsp;Objectives/Goals:&nbsp;NC Standard Course of Study for Information Skills:- Competency Goal 2: The learner will IDENTIFY and USE criteria for excellence to evaluate information and formats.- Competency Goal 2.05: Determine accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness of information resources.&nbsp;American Association of School Librarians: Standards for the 21st-Century Learner:1.1.5 - Evaluate
information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.1.1.9 - Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.1.2.4 - Maintain a critical stance by questioning the validity and accuracy of all information.1.4.3 - Monitor gathered information, and assess for gaps or weaknesses.2.1.2 - Organize knowledge so that it is useful.2.1.4 - Use technology and other information tools to analyze and organize information.3.1.3 - Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.3.1.4 - Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.3.4.2 - Assess the quality and effectiveness of the learning product.

Students are grouped (3 or 5 to a group) into detective agencies. Each agency chooses a name and decides how to divide the reading. Students read websites about web evaluation individually and take notes on the provided Note Organizer (see Process page for a link to the organizer). Students meet back with their agency groups to develop a set of agency evaluation guidelines. They are decided which are the most important and categorized into the categories WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW.

In their agency groups, the students test their guidelines on the provided websites. They may adjust their guidelines as they see fit. A Testing Organizer is provided for the students to make notes and to show the success of their testing (see Process page for a link to the organizer). When the agency is done with their testing, and they agree, provide agreement and about their guidelines, the agency posts their official Web Detective Guidelines on their agency's page on the class wiki. (Example: http://webdetectivesample.pbwiki.com/)

The class reviews and discusses the Web Detective Guidelines. One is chosen to be the "preferred" or "starred" guideline. It will be listed on the main page of the wiki with a star. However, all guidelines will remain on the wiki for reference. Assessment is on the individual and agency's guidelines. Resources are set up for the final Web Evaluation Guides.

For an example, see http://webdetectivesample.pbwiki.com/Graphic Organizers (Paper)

Two graphic organizers are provided at the bottom of the "Process" page on this site to help the students on this webquest.* Note Organizer for categories WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW (to be used while reading websites and group discussion in developing the group "agency" guidelines) Testing Summary Organizer of Evaluation Criteria (to be used during testing phase of group guidelines)

Websites with Website Evaluation Criteria (for students to read) The following existing website evaluation criteria are provided for the students to read and synthesize their own set of website evaluation criteria. These sites are predominantly from high schools and public libraries. A couple are from universities. The most challenging to read and synthesize is the one from U.C. Berkeley, but it is included for its comprehensiveness in explaining why various criteria may be important.

Multnomah County Library: Evaluating Websites: http://www.multcolib.org/homework/webeval.html


Several websites are presented on the page until you see the stick figure with the "thinking bubbles" and the "CLUE" on the picture of a scroll. Hunterdon Central Library: Research Guides: http://central.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/imc/research_guides

Click on "Evaluating a Web Page" about the 4th link down on the page to bring up a Word document used for website evaluation.

University of Michigan Library: Criteria for Web Site Evaluation:http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/guides/evaluation

University of California Berkeley Library: Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply and

Questions to Ask: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html

Websites to use in testing: Disclaimer: With additional time, the set of test websites should be assembled to ensure that all the desired criteria would be necessary to "pass" the testing.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/ Official http://www.whitehouse.org/ Bogus (Parody website - clearly indicated at very bottom of page): http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/ Bogus (Does not fit with what is known about octopus, bogus responsible party. It looks real but has many "silly" clues. This may fool students) http://www.npca.org/marine_and_coastal/marine_wildlife/octopus.html

Official http://www.hp-lexicon.org/ Good; it may be interesting to see how it turns out on the evaluations. http://www.jkrowling.com/


http://www.ciwes.com/ Credits: This WebQuest was created as a class assignment by ECI 541, Reading in the Content Areas, at NC State University, Summer 2008. The idea for this WebQuest was inspired by the following WebQuest: http://www.albany.edu/~ef8043/webquest.htm

Standards

Credits

Other