Navigating online information

Know your source—
Don’t be taken for a ride!
“Information anxiety”

- Sheer volume of information available to us through technology can be overwhelming.

- “Information Society” or “Knowledge Age”
  - Information is a commodity

"The most meaningful way to differentiate your company from your competition ... is to do an outstanding job with information. How you gather, manage, and use information will determine whether you win or lose."

_Bill Gates, Business at the Speed of Thought_
Research “anxiety”

Project Information Literacy -- Surveyed 8,353 students on 25 U.S. campuses

- 84% had problems “getting started.”
- Many found steps of research process difficult.
  - 66% had problems defining a topic
  - 62% had problems narrowing a topic
  - 63% had problems finding resources
- Rather than using library resources, students relied on familiar
  - 92% used search engines
  - 70% used Wikipedia
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Words for research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear,</td>
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<td>Dread,</td>
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<td>Angst,</td>
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“Everyday life information”

P.I.L. cont.

- Sources: 95% of students used a search engine for every day life information
- Prevalent finding was that they used internet for personal decision-making in everyday lives.
  - Product or service—74%
  - Health/wellness—74%
  - Jobs or career—67%
  - Traveling or trip planning—61%
Research is research...

Sources are different, but process is the same:
First step: Brainstorm....

What do I know?

What do I want/need to know?

From where and/or from who will I find the information?
Characteristics of information

Factual vs. Analytical

Subjective vs. Objective

Primary vs. Secondary
Evaluating Internet Information

- **Author:** Is an author identified? Who? Qualified?
- **Current:** Is this information current?
- **Content:** Where does the information come from? Are sources identified? How is it presented?
- **Edu or .gov or .org**
- **Purpose:** What is purpose and nature of sponsoring organization? Intent?
- **Tone:** Objective or biased?
Some practice

• “Buying a used car.”

• “Reliability ratings on hundreds of used cars.”

• Cars.com
It’s all about the source...

For class assignments and scholarly research, the best sources are from the library!

- Licensed databases are designed for research;
- Multiple tools to help you get started;
- Scholarly articles are readily available;
- Librarians are available and happy to help!

http://libguides.uwc.edu/aecontent.php?pid=561172