



Berkman

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society
at Harvard University

MODULE: INFORMATION QUALITY: RESEARCH METHODS

DRAFT



Youth and Media

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Overview

This module familiarizes participants with the different factors which are important for consideration when searching for and evaluating information.

From there, participants can engage in a variety of research methods on the internet, from traditional sources (such as Google Scholar) to new sources (like Twitter).

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Explore how search and evaluation processes play a role in online information quality.
- Understand that different information sources offer varying qualities which may be more or less useful to answer a given question in a particular context.
- Explore how social media can be useful in a research context.
- Apply what participants have learned about the search and evaluation phases to shape their own research.

Age/Grade

13-18 years old

Grades 6-12

Audience

Entry level and up (no experience necessary)

Duration

100 minutes

- IQ Game (25 minutes)
- IQ Game Debrief: IQ of sources (15 minutes)
- Traditional sources (10 minutes)
- Alternative sources (15 minutes)
- Search Challenge (20 minutes)
- Debrief (10)
- Closing (5)

Materials

- IQ Game Cards
 - To generate more cards, click here: <http://yam.dev.berkmancenter.org/>
- Resources Handout
- Candy/prizes
- Computers (1 per team) with internet access
- Resources Presentation:
 - http://prezi.com/ijvzi1ngs_p8/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=exoshare

IQ Game

(40 minutes)

Goal

For each round, the team with the “best” link (and accompanying supporting argument) wins the point. The goal of the game is to explore how we search and evaluate information in the world.

Number of players

2+ teams (preferably of 2-3 students)

Game Components

- Cards for each round (10+)
Note: For a 25 minute game, use 2 rounds, and to extend the game, simply add more rounds.
- Copies of the starting “link” for each round – 1 per team
- Cards for sample round (3-4)
- Timer

Setup

- Before each round, distribute the cards around the room so that the side with the search engine result is face up (the content should be on the back).
- Set the timer. For the first round, teams should have 7 minutes, for the second round, 6 minutes, etc. *Time limits can be changed.*

Rules for Each Round

Note: The facilitator can demonstrate the game with the **sample round**.

- At the start of each round a new question and context will be presented.
- The Google Search will be read by the facilitator.
- Each team will receive the first card, which is the first search result. *Youths often click on the first search result in a Google search.*
- There are 9+ other cards placed around the room. The top side looks like the information on the Google Search result page, and the down side is the page content when a search result is clicked on.
- Each team decides if they like the search result (the one they are given), and if they want to click on it (flip it over), and if they want to use the information (keep the card) or not (turn the card back over and continue searching). As teams move around the room in a physical Google “search,” **they must never be holding more than one search result card at a time.**
- When time runs out, teams have 1-2 minutes to discuss and prepare their argument.
- At the end of the round, each team needs one card they use to
 - answer the original search query
 - explain why they chose the source
 - why their source should be trusted
- The facilitator will judge the “winner” of each round.

Post-Round Discussion Questions

- Why did you choose this card? Why do you think it's the best result?
- Which factors did you think influenced your decision?
- When you search for things online, do you look for some of these same factors?
- What else do you look for?
- Why is your card better than Team X's?

Post-Game Discussion Questions

- As you played this game, did you change your strategies? How so?
- Which factors do you think are more important than others when you search for information?
- Are there any things which aren't on the cards which you think about when you decide if information is good?
- What would you include in your own media in order to attract other people and look legit to them?

Say: As each team played the game, their strategies changed. [*Link back to the Marshmallow Challenge.*] Also, we decided that certain things about websites can make us more likely to use or trust a site, such as... [*recap what participants said*]. So, keeping all of that in mind, now, *you* are going to pitch an idea for creating interesting, relevant, and reliable information online.

Sources for Research

(30 minutes)

Goal: To explore different kinds of research sources.

Materials: Resources handout

Prezi presentation: http://prezi.com/ijvzi1ngs_p8/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=exoshare

Say: We've talked about how to evaluate information via a Google search. Let's talk about other places on the internet where you can find research material. [*Walk through the Prezi and explain the benefits of each source.*]

Research Methods:

- **Google/Bing:** search engine
 - Use **Boolify** to learn the boolean operators and refine your search queries!
- **Google Scholar:** search engine for journal articles
 - Use "Cited by ##" or "Related articles" to broaden your search
- **Wikipedia:** use Wikipedia for an overview of your topic, or for a list of sources to help you get started!
- **Library of Congress: Ask a Librarian:** Use the LoC Ask a Librarian feature to email a librarian who specializes in your research area, and you should receive a reply within 5 business days
- **Twitter:** use #hashtags to search for tweets, and use *Advanced Search >> Near This Place* to search for location-specific tweets (useful if you're exploring local news and history!)
- **OpenStatusSearch.com:** search public FB statuses to see what people are saying. This is useful for social media activism research.
- **Google Blog Search:** search engine for blogs
 - Because of the way Google Blog Search finds blogs, it is updated much faster than a regular Google search
- **Addictomatic:** news aggregator
 - Addictomatic also searches YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter, and displays everything on one page

Say: Are there other places on the internet that you go to, in order to find information?

[*Pass out Resources Handout*]

Search Challenge

(20 minutes)

Goal: To practice research skills on the internet, using traditional and non-traditional sources.

[Note: This activity was adapted from one found here, created by Kelly Burns: <http://www.aejmc.org/topics/archives/1299>]

Materials: Computers (1+ per team) with internet access, resources handout, Prezi

Say: We've talked about how to search and evaluate information online. Now we're going to put those skills into practice. One Direction, the band, has a movie coming out: **1D3D**, or **One Direction: This is Us**. One Direction has hired **YOUR TEAM** to be their advertising directors. It's your job to figure out what people are saying about the movie now, and to create a plan for future advertising. Are they advertising enough on Facebook, but not Twitter? Should there be more news articles about them? Find **10 pieces of interesting and/or useful information** about the new movie, from as many different websites as possible (use your Resources Handout!). You have **twenty minutes**. Remember, you must present a list of the information you found, as well as **citations for that information**.

[Note: Another option is to split students into teams for different movies/brands, if there are enough students.]

Debrief/Shareout

(10 minutes)

[Ask participants to share their findings/advertising plan.]

Say:

- What was your best search strategy? What didn't work so well?
- Which websites (platforms) were easier to search than others?
- For your own projects, which websites do you think try to use for advertising?

Closure

(5 minutes)

Say: Thank you **so** much for participating in all of today's activities! What is one thing you learned from the games we played today? [*Wait for response.*] That's awesome! We also talked about different things which are important to think about when you search for information. What are some of those factors? [*Wait for response.*] Don't forget that it's important to not just consider the content of a website, but other things too, such as when it was **last updated**, **the source** of the information, **relevance**, and **accessibility**.

After we talked about searching and evaluating information, we also talked about ways for you to do research online. What were some of those ways? How will you actually use these research resources?

Where to Research

Google (<http://www.google.com>)

- Try to use keywords, not questions
- If you want to get more specific in your search, you can try special operators, such as “”.
 - Ex: “Taylor Swift” instead of *Taylor Swift* (this will only give you results on Taylor Swift, instead of including pages that just have the words “Taylor” and “Swift” somewhere on there)
- **Boolify** (<http://www.boolify.org>)
 - To try other special operators, use Boolify to make things easier!

Google Scholar (<http://www.scholar.google.com>)

- If you really like an article you found, click on “Cited by...” to see other research that has used that same article! That other research is probably related to your topic.

Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.com>)

- Use Wikipedia to get an overview/summary of your research topic.
- Look at the references in an article to do more research.

Library of Congress: Ask a Librarian (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/>)

- If you need help, you can email a librarian who specializes in your topic, and they can help you find what you’re looking for. Librarians will respond to your email within 5 business days.

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/search-advanced>)

- To find tweets near you about a particular topic, use Twitter Advanced Search to put in your *location* and the keywords/#hashtags you’re interested in.

FB Public Status Search (<http://openstatussearch.com>)

- To find public FB posts about a topic, use this search engine.

Google Blog Search (<http://www.google.com/blogsearch>)

- This search engine only looks at blogs, but because of the way it works, Blog Search finds new posts much faster than normal search engines.

Addict-o-matic (<http://addictomatic.com>)

- To search Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, and several different news sites at the same time, use Addict-o-matic.