# USING THE INTERNET FOR RESEARCH

## How to use the Internet effectively and how to avoid the pitfalls

## Purpose of this Seminar

In the Anglo European Sixth Form you will be expected to use your independent study time effectively and part of this time is likely to involve using the internet to research essays, presentations or coursework.

Many students struggle to use the internet efficiently and therefore end up either spending hours researching and coming up with very little, or, printing off pages of research which is not very focussed and which doesn't help their studies directly.

This presentation gives you tips to help you use the internet efficiently, so that when you use it in the Sixth Form you find what you are looking for quickly, and the information you glean is directly related to the task set.

## TASK:

- Open a Word Document, title it 'My Effective Internet Research Tips' and copy and paste the tips as you go through the presentation when prompted.
- Make sure you print this off before you go and bring with you on your first day of Sixth Form.
- REMEMBER – this seminar is not about how quickly you complete it!

# Common Mistakes made by students

- They rely on Internet searches for their research and ignore other key sources.

- They don't critically evaluate the quality of the information they find

- They copy information from the Internet and don't acknowledge their sources

# The Internet is a vast electronic library, right?

- WRONG!!!!

- Yes it is vast and it is electronic, BUT

- It is NOT a library.  It's contents are not catalogued and are not organised logically

- It is easier to publish something on the web than in print and as a result information is not always reliable.

- **Task** - can you spot the deliberate mistake in the Anglo Wikipedia site? (click on flag)

- (hint: OMW, how famous are their ex-students?

# BBC NEWS | Technology | What is it with Wikipedia?

- Open the hyperlink above and find the part which starts, 'They asked experts to review articles covering scientific topics….'
- Surprising? Task –copy the quote below into your notes under the sub-heading of 'Wikipedia'

- "An educated audience is the only realistic way to ensure that we are not duped, tricked, fleeced or offended by the media we consume, and learning that online information sources may not be as accurate as they pretend to be is an important part of that education."

# Know what you are looking for

- This will save you time and energy

- Don't rely on US sites.
  - Searching UK sites will give you less to trawl through

- Set yourself a time limit

- Don't drift aimlessly through cyberspace

# Beware of inappropriate sources

- Don't just access random sites
  - Look for official or academic sites

- Check the content
  - Is it out of date?
  - Is it biased or downright inaccurate?

07.05.2000

Black cats are evil

2 + 2 = 5

# Remember W W W

- **Who?**
  - Question the source – look for the author, publisher, sponsor, contact details etc.

- **What?**
  - Question the content – is it accurate, fact or opinion, unbiased, current, appropriate level?

- **Where?**
  - Question the location of the information. Where is it from?

  Task: Copy this text above under 'Top Tips', but also include the need to set yourself a time limit

# Never 'cut and paste'

- This is **'plagiarism'** – using someone else's work or idea and passing it off as your own

- Your teacher **will know** and you will incur **penalties**

- If you do use material from the web you must use proper citation methods to show your source of information

- Click on these BBC news stories about plagiarism
  Task: Under a title of 'Plagiarism', copy the quotation from the examiner on the first story, noting his name as the source

# Be selective
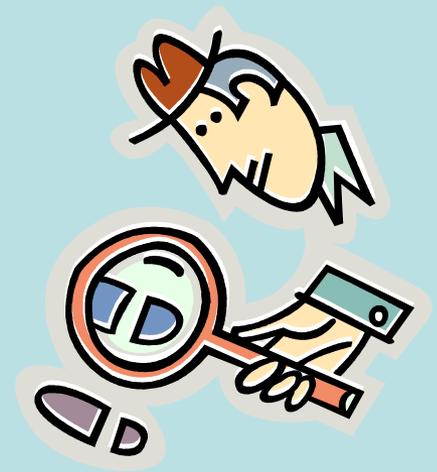
- Learn to recognise official sites

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- Learn to discount those that are not what they seem

– **CHECK THESE OUT FOR YOURSELF!**





(This is a PDF, so quit the PPT to view)

# Using the URL

- You can get some very useful clues about the quality of a website from its Internet address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator)

- Search engine results often take you deep within web sites rather than to the home pages

- Try deleting the right hand part of the URL as far as the first / to see if you can get to the homepage.

- Click on the link below and do it for yourself

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/tennis/

# Know your codes

- You can often find out more about the nature of the organisation that owns the server from the organisation code - **check out these sites**:

- **.ac**          academic/educ (UK) www.essex.ac.uk
- **.edu**         academic/educ (US) www.harvard.edu
- **.sch**         school www.angloeuropean.essex.sch.uk
- **.co(m)**      commercial www.argos.co.uk   /   www.asda.com
- **.gov**        government www.dvla.gov.uk
- **.org**        non- govt./non-profit making www.oxfam.org

- Task: Make a note of the organisation codes under this title.
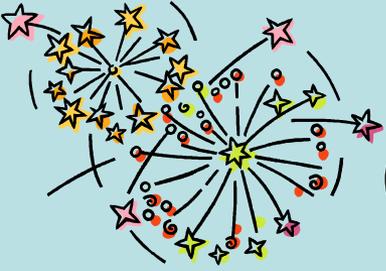
# Google is Great!!

- Well – maybe not that great!

- Remember that search engines like Google do not contain everything that is available online.

- Try a search for 'university' in www.monstercrawler.com
- Now compare the first few results to those when you search for the same term in Google or Bing, which is better? Does only one appear to contain global results?

- Task: Under 'How to search' make a note of Metacrawler and other multiple search engines

# Narrowing your search

- Choose your search terms carefully
  - 'Education' will bring up tens of thousands of hits
  - 'Post 16 education' will bring up fewer hits

- Try related words
  - 'tertiary education' or 'FE Colleges'

- Task
  - look at, and note, the difference between the number of hits for '**education**' and '**tertiary education**' on **Google**.
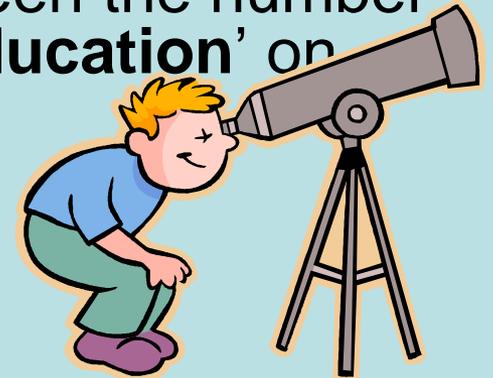
# Be more specific

- Use plus(+), minus (-) and inverted commas ("…..") to make your search more specific

- **President+J.F.Kennedy** will bring up references to President JF Kennedy

- **President – Kennedy** will **not** bring up any references to President Kennedy

- **"Assassination of President Kennedy"** will only bring up references to his assassination

- Use **Google Advanced** to search in more detail

- **Task** - Look at these differences on **Google** now – **note the number of hits** for each.  Can you make the reference more relevant if we only want to find out about his inauguration speech? Make a note of the differences under 'Efficient Searching'

# Keep Records

- Keep a record of addresses (URLs) and dates of the web pages you visit when researching work. **Copy the URL into your own file**

- **Make a note of the author, when updated and when accessed**.  You will need this information if you quote or use any information from a web page in a piece of academic work.

- All your sources, including the Internet must be cited in your References
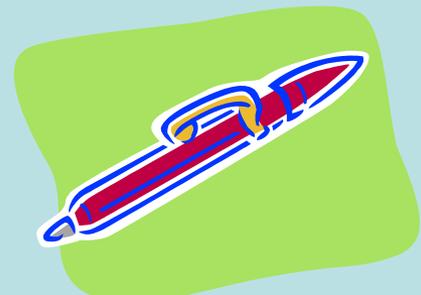
# Stay focussed

- Don't get side-tracked,
  Look what can happen, click here…

- Have clear goals in mind
  - Know **what** you are looking for

- Set a **time limit** before you start
  - It's easy to **lose** an hour on the Internet
  Task: See how long the rest of this PPT takes
  you using this online stopwatch, put in your notes under
  'Time myself' the website address

# Essay Research - THINK!

- Look at your essay/assignment title

- Scan for key words and information related to it
  - Save useful sites to 'Favourites'/use 'bookmarks'
- Copy relevant parts into a word document to act as a source to write your own interpretation
- Remember to note sites used for your References
- BUT - Think before you print from a web page
  - You could be printing a 60 page document

Task – under 'Essay Research' copy these tips.

# Look at other sources

- Don't rely solely on Internet searches
  - You may not find exactly what you need

- Remember there are lots of other sources of information available to you
  - Library resources (books, journals etc)
  - Subject reading lists
  - Course materials
  - Ask your teachers for sources
  - If in doubt, ask!
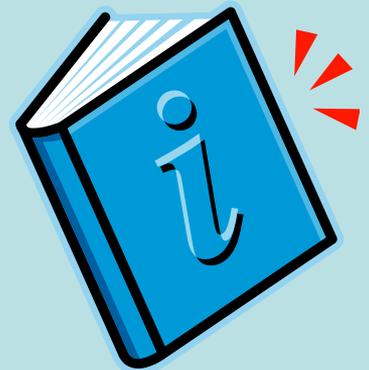
# And finally, remember

- **Anyone**, **anywhere** can put **anything** on the Internet, click:



- **You** have to be selective!!

    Almost there…..

# TASK

- **Using the skills you have just learned**:

Undertake an internet Treasure Hunt here:
http://www.weblens.org/2.html

If you run out of time, maybe try to complete it over the summer to improve your internet research skills

**The answers** are given at the end and show you how they came up with them in the most efficient way

**PRINT OFF YOUR WORK SO FAR and remember to bring it with you in September**