

Evaluation of Web Sites

Kathy Schrock
kschrock@capecod.net

This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'Evaluation of Web Sites'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying the name 'Kathy Schrock' and the email address 'kschrock@capecod.net'. The scene is decorated with a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.

Goals 2000 Cafe

"The percentage of all students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, (and) apply knowledge...will increase substantially."

Goals 2000 : National Education Goals

This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'Goals 2000 Cafe'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying a quote: "The percentage of all students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, (and) apply knowledge...will increase substantially." Below the sign and clipboard are a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.

NC Cafe

"The learner will use a variety of computer technologies to access, analyze, interpret, synthesize, apply and communicate information."

NC Standard Course of Study : Computer Skills Curriculum

This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'NC Cafe'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying a quote: "The learner will use a variety of computer technologies to access, analyze, interpret, synthesize, apply and communicate information." Below the sign and clipboard are a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.

Texas Cafe

The student is expected to evaluate the credibility of information sources and determine the writer's motives."

TEKS English, LA & Reading

This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'Texas Cafe'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying a quote: "The student is expected to evaluate the credibility of information sources and determine the writer's motives." Below the sign and clipboard are a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.

MA Cafe

"The student will be able to...select appropriate electronic media for research and evaluate the quality of information obtained."

MA Curriculum Frameworks : English Language Arts

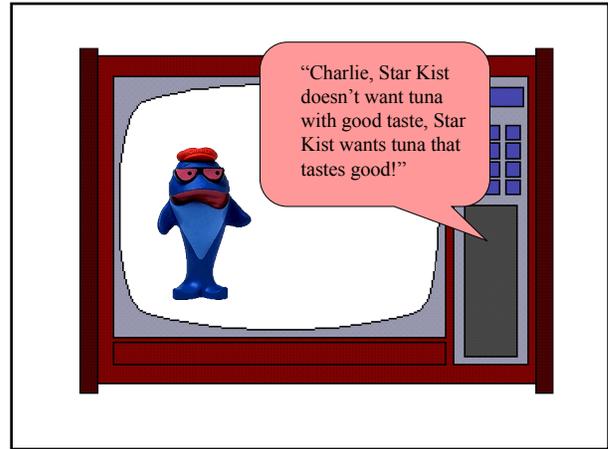
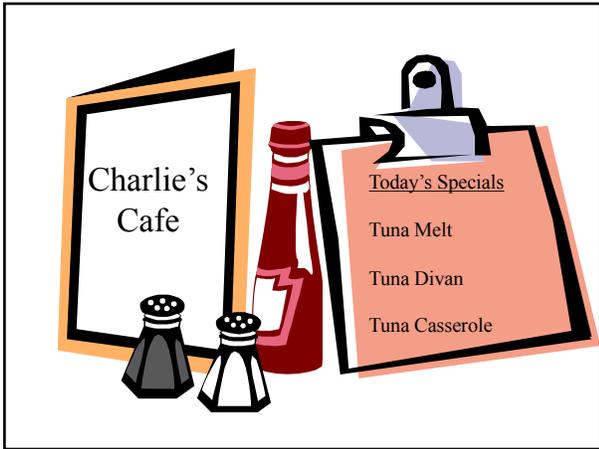
This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'MA Cafe'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying a quote: "The student will be able to...select appropriate electronic media for research and evaluate the quality of information obtained." Below the sign and clipboard are a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.

NJ Cafe

"Students will...organize, synthesize, and evaluate information for appropriateness and completeness."

NJ Core Curriculum Competencies

This graphic features a white sign with a black border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'NJ Cafe'. To its right is a clipboard with a red sheet of paper and a silver clip, displaying a quote: "Students will...organize, synthesize, and evaluate information for appropriateness and completeness." Below the sign and clipboard are a red ketchup bottle, a black pepper shaker, and a white salt shaker.



“Not good taste...taste good...”

- Teach students to evaluate sources
- Evaluate for technical aspects, navigation, and content
- Evaluate different types of pages differently



Adventurers

...the vast unexplored waters were a wonderful challenge and full of adventure

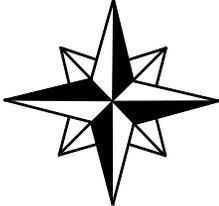


Discoverers

...began exploring the untapped riches of the Net



Navigators



...found (and shared) new ways to get through the unexplored territory



Explorers

...hardy individuals who spent a lot of time creating resources for others

The Immigrants

...came in droves



The Pirates

...the nefarious ones arrived, too



The Coast Guard

...the good guys take care of things on the high seas

Whale Watch Boats

...lead their passengers to quality sites



Critical Evaluation of Web Sites

- Use of the Internet for information
- Technical and design features
- Navigation
- Authorship and authority
- Content
- Summary
- Related research



Technical and Design Features



Technical & Design Features

- Does the Web page extend beyond the side edges of the monitor?
- Does the Web page require extensive downward scrolling to read the information?
- Are there useful headings and subheadings on the page?



Technical & Design Features

- Does the page contain graphics?
 - If so, are they needed?
 - If so, are they appropriately sized for slower modems?
- When graphics are turned off, are there text alternatives?



Technical & Design Features

- Are the grammar and spelling correct?
- Do icons clearly represent what is intended?
- Is the type large enough for use of the page by the visually impaired?



Technical & Design Features

- Is the site usable via a text-based browser?
- Does the site adhere to conventional HTML conventions?
- Is multimedia appropriately incorporated?
- Can the site be accessed any time of day?



Navigation



Navigation

- If an image map is present, are there also text alternatives?



Technical & Design Features | Navigation | Authorship & Authority | Content

Navigation

- Are there links back to the home page from the supporting pages?
- Are links included to move you to another part of the same page? (Name references) Are they useful?
- Do all internal and external links work?



Navigation

- Is the overall site “user-friendly”?
- Is a search tool available for the site’s content?
- Is the resource organized logically for its intended audience/purpose?



Authorship and Authority



Authorship and Authority

- Is the page signed with a name and e-mail address?
- Is information about the author given?
- Is the author affiliated with a recognized institution? Does this affiliation seem to bias the information?



Content



Content

- Is the purpose/mission of the site stated?
- Is the date of last update included?
- Has the site been revised recently? Is this important for your purpose?



Content

- Is the information on the site factual in nature?
- Does the information appear to be opinion rather than fact?
- Does the site contain original information?



Content

- Is a bibliography of sources included?
- Does the information appear accurate? Is it verifiable in an accepted print source?
- Does the site fulfill its stated purpose?



Content

- Does the site contain primary source material?
- If the site supports research, are research methodologies and results given?
- If the site contains writings, are the entire documents included?



Content

- Does the site contain links to relevant outside sites?
- Is a form or method of offering comments about the site included?
- Does the content seem to add to the existing body of knowledge about the topic?



Summary



Summary

- The Web page should be readable on a 14" monitor, with graphics turned on or off, via a text-based browser, and adhere to HTML conventions.
- The page should be user-friendly, well-organized, and all links should work.



Summary

- Information should be present to contact the author of a site.
- The content should be able to be verified and replicated.
- The content should add to the existing body of knowledge in a unique way.



Related Research



Related Research

Harris, Judi.
*Virtual Architecture:
 Designing and Directing
 Curriculum-Based Telecomputing.*
 ISTE, 1998.



Operation vs. Application

There is a difference between using computer tools (operation) and using computer tools (application).



Evaluation crosses this line when students assess whether sites were useful for their purposes.



Information into Knowledge

Students need to be taught how to...

- determine whether to use the information
- determine how to use the information
- determine if the information is valid
- determine if, even in the information is valid, if it is relevant to the purpose



Related Research

Mary Ann Fitzgerald
*Misinformation on the Internet:
 Applying Evaluation Skills to Online Information.*
Emergency Librarian,
 January-February 1997, pp. 9-14.



Misinformation

Mis'in-form':
 supply with false or
 misleading information (verb)



Types of Misinformation

- Some Internet misinformation is simply an old scheme dressed in a new electronic disguise
- A prime example would be the chain letter



Types of Misinformation

- Human error
 - inadvertently created content
 - may easily be corrected
 - may last for a long time on the Net



Types of Misinformation

- Misconduct
 - jokes and pranks proliferate
 - financial gain may be the reason
 - scholarly misconduct is serious



Types of Misinformation

- Removal of information from context
 - intentional or unintentional
 - use of hypertext and the absence of contextual clues



Types of Misinformation

- Currency and bias
 - fast uploading of information may be incomplete
 - updating may not be done regularly
 - Internet content may be biased by the users



Dealing With Misinformation

- Filtering and rating
 - “Missing information is misinformation”
 - Labeling may prejudice the reader’s evaluation



Dealing With Misinformation

- Critically evaluate everything
 - Look for triggers
 - Remember that deception is easy on the Net



Dealing With Misinformation

- Learn the topic
 - Follow relevant links
 - Get information from print sources
 - Re-visit online sites
 - Compare and contrast search results



Dealing With Misinformation

- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Identify and detect bias
- Evaluate arguments



Dealing With Misinformation

- Evaluate the writer’s authority
 - determine the credentials of the author
 - consult an online library catalog
 - consult an online bookstore



Dealing With Misinformation

- Don't assume
 - that all on-screen information is true
 - that facts that you agree with are true
 - that online information represents the universe of information about the topic



Bibliography

Schrock, Kathleen.
*Evaluating Internet Web Sites:
An Educator's Guide.*
KS: Master Teacher, 1997.



The End



©1998
Kathleen Schrock
kschrock@capecod.net