Savvy Surfers: Website Evaluation and Media Literacy

Created by: Kari Lomanno
Title/Role: Technology Integration Specialist
Organization/School Name: Western Branch Middle School
Location: Virginia

Grade Level: 6
Type of Lesson: Lesson in a unit
Type of Schedule: Flexible
Collaboration Continuum: Intensive

Content Area: Language Arts
Content Topic: Evaluating websites activity

Standards for the 21st-Century Learner

Skills Indicator(s):
1.1.4 Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.
2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information and apply knowledge to curricular areas, real-world situations, and further investigations.
3.1.1 Conclude an inquiry-based research process by sharing new understandings and reflecting on the learning.

Dispositions Indicator(s):
1.2.4 Maintain a critical stance by questioning the validity and accuracy of all information.
2.2.3 Employ a critical stance in drawing conclusions by demonstrating that the pattern of evidence leads to a decision or conclusion.
3.2.1 Demonstrate leadership and confidence by presenting ideas to others in both formal and informal situations.

Responsibilities Indicator(s):
2.3.1 Connect understanding to the real world.

Self-Assessment Strategies Indicator(s):
2.4.1 Determine how to act on information (accept, reject, modify).
3.4.2 Assess the quality and effectiveness of the learning product.

Scenario: Students today are bombarded with information from the Internet, and it's often difficult for them to distinguish between reliable websites and unreliable websites. This lesson will be taught within the context of the media literacy unit of the English curriculum. This lesson builds upon students' previous lesson on deconstructing media messages. They will use the same set of criteria to evaluate websites that they have used to evaluate advertisements. So this particular lesson should be taught toward the end of the media literacy unit. The teacher and the librarian should work together to determine how the lesson will fit. The teacher will introduce the overall media literacy unit and give students practice in evaluating media messages. The librarian will then present the lesson on website evaluation. The librarian will assess
students on website evaluation by having students research three websites and complete an evaluation chart and answer reflection questions. The teacher will then assess the overall media literacy unit with this lesson included.

**Overview:** The AASL standards require students to find, evaluate and select appropriate sources. In this lesson, students will learn how to evaluate websites by using a set of criteria to determine their reliability. Essential questions include the following: How do I know if a website is reliable? What is the purpose of this site? Who is the author? Is the content credible?

**Final Product:** Students will evaluate three websites by completing a chart and answering reflection questions. They will then share their results and reflections in small groups.

**Library Lesson:** The students will learn how to evaluate a website for accuracy, credibility, and reliability. They will develop critical thinking skills and strategies for drawing conclusions in their research.

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 60 minutes

**Assessment**

- **Product:** Students will complete a chart and reflection questions (see attached).
- **Process:** Diagnostic: At the beginning of the lesson, students will play the ?Real or Fake? game to assess their prior knowledge and engage their interest. They will also take an oral pre-test to determine how well they know the criteria for deconstructing media messages. Formative: Students will take a ?Smart Surfer Quiz? online to determine how well they understand the concepts of website evaluation presented in this lesson. This assessment provides a follow-up to the lessons on deconstructing media messages that students have been learning for the past week. Students will then evaluate three websites by completing a chart and answering reflection questions. They will then share their results and reflections in small groups. The chart accurately assesses the standards because it shows the students' understanding of website evaluation, which is a specific element of media literacy. It covers AASL 1.1.4 because it shows that students understand how to find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources. Students also draw conclusions from the websites they visit, which covers AASL 2.1.3. The reflection covers AASL 3.1.1 because students will be sharing their understanding of the material with others and reflecting on their learning. Summative: Students will take a written unit test on the entire media literacy unit to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts.
- **Student self-questioning:** Which criteria should I use to determine the reliability of a website? Who is the author of this site? Why is the format of the site important? Is this site designed to provide information or to sell a product? How can this process help me in the future?

**Instructional Plan**

- **Resources students will use:**
  - Dataset (ie. lists, tables, databases)
  - Interactive Resource (i.e. webpages, multimedia learning objects, chat services)
- **Interactive Resource URL:** http://www.thedogisland.com/

- **Resources instructor will use:**
  - Projector
  - Laptop
  - Smart board
Instruction/Activities

**Direct instruction:** The librarian will begin this lesson by showing the attached PowerPoint presentation and playing a game with students called "Real or Fake." The presentation includes viral images from the Internet, and students have to tell whether the photos are real or fake. Then they will discuss their criteria for determining this. The librarian will then lead a discussion on how information is published online versus how it is published in print. Explain that anyone can publish anything online. Review the criteria for deconstructing media messages and show slides with examples of each aspect of evaluation.

**Modeling and guided practice:** Show students two websites on "dog resorts" and have them discuss which is the most reliable: http://www.thedogisland.com/ and http://www.clubpetresorts.com/ One site is a hoax, and the other is a real resort. Discuss how students know the difference, referring back to the original criteria.

**Independent practice:** Students will visit three more sites and complete the website evaluation chart and reflection questions.

**Sharing and reflecting:** When the evaluation is finished, students will get into small groups and discuss their results. A large group discussion could be done to conclude the lesson.

**Have you taught this lesson before:** Yes

**Strategies for differentiation:** Students who need extra help can work with partners or small groups.

AASL/Common Core State Standards Crosswalk

**English Language Arts:**

**CC.6.W.8** » English Language Arts » Research to Build and Present Knowledge » 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. (6)

**CC.6.R.I.8** » English Language Arts » Integration of Knowledge and Ideas » 8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (6)

**CC.6.R.I.9** » English Language Arts » Integration of Knowledge and Ideas » 9. Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person). (6)

**CC.6.W.1.e** » English Language Arts » Text Types and Purposes » e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented. (6)

**CC.6.W.2.f** » English Language Arts » Text Types and Purposes » f. Provide a concluding statement or
section that follows from the information or explanation presented. (6)

**CC.6.SL.1.c** » English Language Arts » Comprehension and Collaboration » c. Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion. (6)

**CC.6.SL.1.d** » English Language Arts » Comprehension and Collaboration » d. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing. (6)

**CC.6.SL.5** » English Language Arts » Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas » 5. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information. (6)

**CC.6.R.L.1** » English Language Arts » Key Ideas and Details » 1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (6)

**CC.6.W.1.b** » English Language Arts » Text Types and Purposes » b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text. (6)

**CC.6.W.7** » English Language Arts » Research to Build and Present Knowledge » 7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. (6)

**CC.6.R.I.7** » English Language Arts » Integration of Knowledge and Ideas » 7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue. (6)

**CC.6.SL.3** » English Language Arts » Comprehension and Collaboration » 3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (6)

**CC.6.SL.4** » English Language Arts » Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas » 4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. (6)
Are the following photos...

REAL OR FAKE?
Real or Fake...

HOW DO YOU KNOW?
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET SOMETHING PUBLISHED ON THE INTERNET?
HOW IS THE PROCESS DIFFERENT FOR BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND NEWSPAPERS?
How do you deconstruct a media message?

- **Author**
  - Who created the message?

- **Format**
  - .com – commercial site
  - .org – nonprofit organization
  - .gov – U.S. government site
  - .edu – educational institution

- **Audience**
  - Who is the site intended for?

- **Content**
  - What message is being sent?

- **Purpose**
  - To inform, persuade, or sell?
Suppose you are researching the **best study strategies for your learning style**. Which site would you choose based on author?

- **DoYourHomework.com**, a blog by Joey Jones, businessman
- **LearnIt.com**, a learning strategy site by Dr. Susan Strouse, current superintendent of schools
- **HomeworkMaster.net**, no author information available
Suppose you are doing research on smoking prevention.

Based on the URLs, which sites would probably have the most reliable information?

- www.sitecreator.com/tjones/cigarettes
- www.smokefree.gov
- www.kidshealth.org
- www.lung.org (American Lung Association)
- www.quitsmokingnow.com
CONTENT:
Which site to choose?

• http://www.thedogisland.com/
• http://www.clubpetresorts.com/
Smart Surfer quiz

• Which of the following is NOT an example of a URL extension?
  A) .gov
  B) .edu
  C) .npr
  D) .com
Smart Surfer quiz

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Smart Surfer quiz

• Which of the following is the best indicator that a Web site is reliable?

A) The author of the site tells you the information is reliable.
B) The author of the site provides contact information and his or her qualifications.
C) The author links to his or her favorite Web sites.
D) The author states in bold letters that the site was proofread by a librarian.
Smart Surfer quiz

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Smart Surfer quiz

• What does this URL tell you about the source? http://vos.ucsb.edu
  A) It is associated with an educational institution.
  B) It is an English teacher’s personal home page.
  C) It is an article from a magazine.
  D) It is from a government site.
Smart Surfer quiz

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  B) It is an English teacher’s personal home page.

  C) It is an article from a magazine.

  D) It is from a directory.
Smart Surfer quiz

• Evaluating content on the Web is important because...
  A) Web authors are always less professional.
  B) Web authors are always biased.
  C) Anyone can publish on the Web. There’s no guarantee that what you’re reading is reliable.
  D) Printed information is always more accurate than information found on the Web.
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Smart Surfer quiz

You found a site that seems to have credible information, but there is no date of publication. What do you do?

A) Panic.
B) Make up your own information.
C) Use the information anyway. You don’t have time to keep searching.
D) Try to find a site that has quality information AND a date of publication. Most reputable sites will have a copyright date.
Smart Surfer quiz

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  **D) Try to find a site that has quality information **AND** a date of publication. Most reputable sites will have a copyright date.**
Smart Surfer quiz

- You are on a .gov site, but you can’t find an author. Can you use this site?
  
  A) No because a site must have an author to be credible.
  
  B) No because .gov sites are not reliable.
  
  C) Yes because most .gov sites can be trusted. They are only published by the U.S. government.
  
  D) Yes because you are in a rush and don’t have time to look elsewhere.
Smart Surfer quiz

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Happy surfing!
EVALUATING WEBSITES

Learning Goal: I will use critical-thinking skills to evaluate websites for accuracy, credibility, and reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Website 1</th>
<th>Website 2</th>
<th>Website 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is the <strong>author</strong> of the site?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the <strong>format</strong> of the site (.gov, .edu, .com, .org)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is the intended <strong>audience</strong> for the site?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What message does the site send? Is the <strong>content</strong> accurate or reliable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the overall <strong>purpose</strong> of the site (to inform, to entertain, to persuade, etc.)?</td>
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**Reflection Questions**

Which of these sites do you think is the most credible? Explain your process in coming to this conclusion.

How might you use this process in the future? Think of a scenario (outside of school research) in which website evaluation might be important.