

Internet Research

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The background of the slide is a photograph of a desk. On the desk, there is a laptop with a keyboard visible, a white mug with a red logo, and several papers. The text is overlaid on this image in semi-transparent white boxes.

Lesson Objective

To explore the best way to use internet research.

Success Criteria

- To identify advantages and disadvantages of internet research.
- To analyse internet sources for reliability.
- To understand what plagiarism means.
- To understand what a bibliography is.

Imagine...

1. Imagine you live in a world with no internet. For homework, you've been asked to do a project on the life of Charles Dickens.

Where would you go to find out information?

2. Finish the sentences:

Research means.....

The most popular way to do research today is....



Internet

If we need to know something, we almost always turn to the internet for answers.

What are the ADVANTAGES of using the internet?



Advantages of Internet Research

- It is quick.
- You can access it from home/school/work/phone.
- You can search for very specific things.
- You often get lots and lots of information.
- You often get pictures or videos which give more information.
- You can copy and paste information easily.



So is it all good?

So what's the down side, the DISADVANTAGES to using the internet for research?



Disadvantages of Internet Research

- It is quick.
- You often get lots and lots of information.
- How do you know you can trust the information? Anyone can post online.
- You can copy and paste information easily.
- The words or concepts in a piece of information may not be at the right level for you, it may be difficult to understand.
- Information can go out of date.

Question:

You'll notice that three of the disadvantages also appear in the advantages list. Why do you think this is?



It is Quick

PROBLEM:

As an internet search engine will give you information on any topic in less than a second, pupils tend to underestimate the amount of time it will take to complete GOOD internet research.

There are a few steps you need to follow to ensure your research is of the highest quality and they follow in the next slides.

Poor research leads to a poor piece of work.

SOLUTION:

Just because the internet is quick, it doesn't mean your research will be, so give yourself plenty of time to do it thoroughly.

Listen carefully to the points made on the rest of this presentation.



Lots of Information

Being able to access lots of information at once can be very helpful. It also has drawbacks.

PROBLEM:

If you were doing the project mentioned at the start and put 'Charles Dickens' into a search engine, you would get over 33 million different results. No-one can possibly use that much information. In order to narrow it down, you could put in a more specific search 'Charles Dickens biography' to try to find out more about his life. Now there's 865,000 results. This isn't really any more helpful.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed when presented with this amount of information.



Lots of Information

SOLUTION:

Before you start searching, break your topic down into smaller chunks, that way you will be searching for a narrower field of information each time you use the internet.

For example, you're finding out about Dickens' life so think of individual topics:

- Early childhood
- Parents
- School life
- Jobs
- Marriage
- Writing career
- Death

This will make collating your information much easier and should give you fewer choices of website.



Who Can You Trust?

PROBLEM:

It is difficult to know who wrote what on the internet and anyone can post things, whether what they say is true or not. You could repeat 'facts' that are false by mistake.



Who Can You Trust?

SOLUTION:

Be very selective! Only use websites for information that you know you can trust from their reputation. If you look at the suffix to a website, it can tell you a lot.

.ac or .edu or .sch is an academic institution such as a school, college or university. Probably trustworthy.

.gov is a government website, also probably trustworthy.

.org is a nonprofit organisation, such as a charity or a museum. May be trustworthy but be aware of bias and any encyclopaedia websites that members of the public can update.

.com or .co.uk is a commercial organisation. It's best to stick to well known companies, such as the BBC.

You should also cross check – find out if the information is the same on other reputable websites.



Difficulties Understanding

PROBLEM:

Information from the internet is indiscriminate – you might get something written by a primary school pupil or something written by a professor.

Often, pupils try to use information that is so full of words they don't understand, it is of little use.

SOLUTION:

Give the text of any website a scan and check that it is written in a way you understand. If it is too hard, don't use it.

If you understand most of it, look up the words you don't know to make sure you have an understanding of the text as a whole.



Outdated Information

PROBLEM:

Just like books, the information on the internet can go out of date and therefore become incorrect.

For example, this website bis-space.com (The British Interplanetary Society) says this 'The only UK astronaut, Helen Sharman, flew into space (in 1991) with no government backing – the mission was paid for by the then Soviet Union.' This is now untrue, as another UK astronaut, Tim Peake flew to the International Space Station in 2015.



Outdated Information

SOLUTION:

Check when each piece of information was written and use the most recent.

If you can't check the date, cross check the information with any other reliable sources. If you find that one source says something different from another, keep looking until you find out the definitive answer. Or don't use that piece of information.



Copy and Paste

PROBLEM:

It can be tempting to copy and paste information from the internet into a word document for use later. This is OK if you are going to use the document as notes.

It's not OK if you paste words directly from a website into your school work. This is known as **PLAGIARISM**.

Plagiarism means you have tried to take someone else's work and pass it off as your own.

If you are found out, you will get no marks for the piece of work. If you do the same thing at college or university, you can be thrown off the course you are doing.

It is usually very obvious to a teacher when you have copied and pasted an online text!



Copy and Paste

SOLUTION:

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to make your own notes based on the information you have found. You can either make notes directly from the website or make a word document of important information and use that to make notes. Notes should be written in your own words.

If you want to use something directly from a website, you can - but use quote marks and say where it is from.

For example:

Correct:

It has been said that some of Dickens' books are '...among the greatest novels of all time.' (www.thedickensfellowship.org) and I agree.



Incorrect:

I think Dickens' books are among the greatest novels of all time.



You should also include a bibliography for your project. This is a list of the books and websites you have used for research.

Internet Research Summary

BEFORE YOU START:

1. Schedule yourself plenty of time for doing research – at least 50% of the time needed for the whole project should be devoted to research.
2. Break your research topic down into small chunks so that you can look them up one at a time.

WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR SEARCH RESULTS:

3. Select only websites you feel are trustworthy. Check the suffix of the website so that you know what kind of organisation it belongs to.



Internet Research Summary

WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING AT A WEBSITE:

4. Scan the text you are using to make sure you can understand it. If it is impossible to understand, do not use it. If there are some hard words; look them up.
5. Make your own notes from the online information using your own words.
6. Note down the name of the websites you have used.

WHEN YOUR WORK IS FINISHED

7. Write a bibliography including the names of any books and websites you have used. Put it at the end of your work.



Over To You

1. Write the definition of these key words:

Plagiarism

Bibliography

2. Can you remember what these website suffixes mean?

.ac or .edu or .sch

.gov

.org

.com or .co.uk