

# Using Search Engines For Online Research

(NAPSA)—When students prepare for upcoming research projects and reports, many turn to the Internet for information. With the number of Web sites increasing on a daily basis, trying to find information relevant to a particular assignment may seem like an overwhelming and impossible task. Plus, there are the challenges in assessing the legitimacy of a site and correctly citing the source. But there are ways to become a more efficient researcher and cut down on the amount of time it takes to research a topic online.

A logical way to start Internet research is with a search engine. Many students do not know that each search engine has a different way of finding information on the Internet, so the results from one search engine may not be the same as those from another. One way to obtain the best results quickly from the most popular search engines is to use a metasearch engine, such as Dogpile ([www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)). Dogpile searches all of the leading search engines, including Google, Yahoo! and Ask Jeeves at once. Using Dogpile, you can search up to 50 percent more of the Web than any single engine.

It is also important to carefully construct the search terms. The words entered in the search box will have the greatest impact on the quality of the results returned. For that reason, use the most direct words possible. For example, if you're looking for information about the First Amendment or Free Speech, enter "First Amendment" or "Free Speech First Amendment." This will return more relevant results than entering "free speech," which may bring back results on speeches found for free on the Internet.

One challenge with Internet



research is assessing sites to determine the validity of information. One good way to determine legitimacy of an information source is by checking the site's domain (e.g., .com, .org, .gov, etc.). Sites in the .gov domain are generally meant to provide information pertaining to government agencies and associated regulations, whereas .org sites are often connected to issues-based organizations and are meant to arouse support for a cause.

On the darker side of Internet research is the temptation to take shortcuts and plagiarize online content. Plagiarism is using a chunk of text and intentionally or unintentionally representing it as the original work of the person completing the assignment. A study conducted by the Center for Academic Integrity showed that many students don't take Internet plagiarism seriously. More than 40 percent of the 16,000 undergraduate students who responded to the survey admitted they had copied a few sentences from the Internet without citing a source. Even a phrase directly copied from a Web site should be cited with its source. Check with an instructor to learn the most appropriate way to attribute any information online.

Using the Internet wisely to conduct research may not guarantee an "A" for school projects but keeping these tips in mind will help streamline the online research process.