Teaching Social Information Literacy to Undergraduates

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• Weekly for-credit research skills and information use class at the University of Missouri
  • Grew out of a library-use instruction course
• Week 15: Social Media
  • Why?
Why Teach Social Media with Information Literacy

- Your students get a lot of information through social media
- Bring information literacy to passive information behavior
- Opportunity to bring in visual literacy
- Social structures are increasingly being brought into all sorts of information seeking tools
Impediments to Teaching

I USED FACEBOOK ONCE
IT WAS AWFUL

memegenerator.net
Fear of the

Digital Native
Don’t Fear the Digital Native

- Actual comfort levels of students with social technology will rely on a variety of factors¹
- Just because they know how to use something does not mean they know how to use it critically or effectively²

Platform Fragmentation

- Everyone has a Facebook profile and they use it the most, but teen users increasingly dislike it
- After that, there is a variety of different sites and services that are used
  - Twitter clear number 2 and is growing among teens (used by 24%, up from 16% in 2011)
  - What they use varies a lot by different socio-economic factors (African Americans more likely to use Twitter, women more likely to use Pinterest, etc.)
- Solution: create lesson that could apply across platforms


What to Teach (and How)
Filter Bubbles & Selective Exposure

• Most information literacy is about information seeking, but using social media is a passive information behavior
  • Major decision making comes in who to follow – affects quality and bias in information received

• Filter bubbles: tools
• Selective exposure: personal decisions

Images:
Do You Believe Your Eyes?

“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln
LinkedIn page linked to on her Twitter account says she lives in Kansas City and works in public relations. Does not claim to have taken the picture herself.
Casino Pier roller coaster now a water ride
Seaside heights #sandy @JSHurricaneNews
#stormteam4 lockerz.com/s/257477603

Posted by a reporter for NBC New York who covers New Jersey. Account is not verified, but his official page on NBC New York’s website links to this account.
Sent from a verified account for National Public Radio.
Taken by the owner of a painting service. The painting service is based in New York, and the Twitter account gives a location in Brooklyn. Claims to have taken the picture himself.
Publish, Then Filter

- Tendency to post things and let the online community point out errors
- Corrections happen later—what happens when you miss them?
- Good to pivot to after #HurricaneSandy
- What happens when it’s less benign?

Where else could you add social?
Q&A

• Want to chat some more?
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