Reference: The Missing Link in Discovery

Panelists

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Joseph Janes is an Associate Professor at the Information School of the University of Washington. He is the Founding Director of the Internet Public Library and has co-authored several books including "Introduction to Reference Work in the Digital Age." He writes the "Internet Librarian" column for American Libraries magazine. He was the 2006 recipient of the Isadore Gilbert Mudge award for distinguished contributions to reference librarianship. He holds the M.L.S. and Ph.D. from Syracuse University and has taught at various institutions across the United States.

Sue Polanka is the Moderator of "No Shelf Required," a blog about e-books for librarians and publishers. She has been a reference and instruction librarian for 20 years at libraries in Ohio and Texas and is currently the Head of Reference and Instruction at Wright State University Libraries in Dayton, Ohio. She has served on Booklist's Reference Books Bulletin Advisory Board for 10 years, serving as Chair from 2007-2010. She writes a column for RBB's "Off The Shelf," discussing electronic reference issues. Sue's book "No Shelf Required: E-books in Libraries" will be released this summer.
Pew Center study

- 1/3 of teens 100+ texts a day
- 68% have social network site
- 33% keep blogs, 54% read them
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How students research today

Different, and yet the same
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Project Information Literacy results

- Tried and true
- Procrastination
- Looking for context
Table 4: Which resources do students turn to for obtaining background about a topic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources used for obtaining background about a topic</th>
<th>Frequency (%) and N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Course readings</td>
<td>97% 1,903</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Google (i.e., for finding sites other than Wikipedia)</td>
<td>95% 1,891</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Scholarly research databases (EBSCO, ProQuest, JSTOR, etc.)</td>
<td>93% 1,823</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)</td>
<td>90% 1,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Instructors</td>
<td>87% 1,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wikipedia</td>
<td>85% 1,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Government Web sites</td>
<td>74% 1,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Classmates</td>
<td>71% 1,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Personal collection</td>
<td>69% 1,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Library shelves</td>
<td>69% 1,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Encyclopedias (print or online, e.g., Britannica)</td>
<td>61% 1,188</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Friends</td>
<td>57% 1,088</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Other search engines (e.g., Ask, Yahoo!)</td>
<td>52% 1,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Librarians</td>
<td>45% 865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Blogs</td>
<td>25% 474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are nearly 2X as likely to use Wikipedia as librarians.
Student use of Wikipedia

- Summary
- Getting started/oriented
- Ease of use
- Getting language
- One of many sources they use
Where do you typically begin your search for information on a particular topic?

- Search engine: 84%
- E-mail: 6%
- Topic-specific Web sites: 2%
- E-mail information subscriptions: 2%
- Online news: 2%
- Instant messaging/online chat: 1%
- Online bookstore: 1%
- Online database: 1%
- Library Web site: 1%

Sources matter...up to a point

- Content over containers
- Memory and imagination
- Method over material
What has gone away...

- One-volume encyclopedia
- Gazetteer
- Biographical dictionary
- Concordance
What transitioned...

- Directories
- Indexes
- Bibliographies
What persists...

- Almanacs
- Handbooks
- Highly specialized sources, including subject encyclopedias
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Traditional path to vetted reference sources

- Librarians
- Faculty/teachers
Reaching the user

• We don’t see most users
  - Wikipedia
  - Vetted content not on open web

• Those we do see
  - Not enough time
  - Too many silos of information
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Connecting resources

Today: Disconnected information silos

Tomorrow: Seamless connections between resources
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POLL: Would you like to search reference content on a single interface?

• Yes
• No
• Doesn’t Matter
Reference discovery

- Embedded research guides
- Mobile apps
- Widgets
- Releasing metadata
- Web content with geolocation service
- Topic pages
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Release the metadata

• Problems
  - Generally not sent to link resolvers
  - Not indexed in popular journal databases

• Solutions?
  - Releasing partial content to Google books
  - Get metadata to link resolvers
  - Add metadata to the catalog, databases

• Where is reference indexed?
  - Reference Universe
Poll

Should reference content be indexed in journal databases?

• Yes
• No
• Undecided
The Prize

- What if students could discover valuable library reference materials as easily as they find Wikipedia?
- What if the content was rich enough to answer their initial question?
- What if they were lead to the library’s resources vetted by their librarians that they otherwise might not know about?
Credo Reference Topic Pages
Making research easier: Topic Pages

Discoverability
Meet Users Where They Are

Online Reference Library
Provide Big Picture & Vocabulary Context

Gateway to Resources
Access Authoritative Citable Sources

= Credo Reference Topic Pages
Global Warming

Increase in average global temperature, amounting to approximately 0.74°C/1.3°F from 1906 to 2005. Much of this is thought to be related to human activity. Global temperature has been highly variable in Earth history and many fluctuations in global temperature have occurred in historical times, but this most recent episode of warming coincides with the spread of industrialization, prompting the suggestion that it is the result of an accelerated greenhouse effect caused by atmospheric pollutants, especially carbon dioxide gas. The melting and collapse of parts of the Larsen Ice Shelf, Antarctica, in two distinct events in January 1995 and February 2000, have been attributed to global warming, as has the reduction in the Arctic polar ice cap. Melting of land-based ice is expected to raise the sea level in the coming decades (melting of floating ice...
Poll (need to select more than one or rank)

What discovery techniques would you like to see for reference content?

- Content indexed/embedded in journal databases
- Mobile apps
- Search widgets
- Content in Google/Google books
- Release metadata
- Geolocation services on web
Thank you

For more information:
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877.426.5202 x118
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