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http://www.carli.illinois.edu/sites/files/pub_serv/ICForum140618BoyceHandout.pdf

Target Audience - introductory level students, flexible for any discipline

Learning Objectives
1. Students will identify the types of sources available in various research environments in order to understand how information systems are organized to access relevant information.
2. Students will compare the quality, quantity, and content of "found" sources in various research environments in order to understand that information sources vary greatly in content and format and have varying relevance and value, depending on the needs and nature of the search.
3. Students will discuss information needs relevant to their current assignment in order to match information needs to a particular search tool.

Description
This is an exercise based on an activity from the Information Literacy Instruction Cookbook, in which you introduce students to sources available within research environments.

Basic instructional guidelines: break students up into 4 groups. Let each group observe the boxes lined up. Tell them to observe relative sizes, decoration, and what they can see peeking out of the boxes. Each group then takes a box back to their work areas and begins digging into the box. They are observing how much "fluff" there is, what kinds of sources are in it (you've printed off records or Google screen shots for each box), how much fluff relative to sources. Essentially they are trying to guess what kind of research environment they are working with. I usually give them 5-7 minutes to discuss within groups.

Teams will present their box, observations, and educated guesses to the whole class, in order from Google, multidisciplinary, single subject, catalog. You ask leading questions to help guide them during their group discussions and class presentations.