University of Wisconsin-Madison

From the SelectedWorks of Doug Way

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The Information Seeking Behavior of Today’s College Students

Doug Way, Grand Valley State University

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The Information Seeking Behavior of Today’s College Students

Doug Way
Grand Valley State University Libraries
Today we’re going to look at...

• how today’s students look for information and that impacts their work
• the disconnect between this behavior and faculty’s expectations and desires
• ways faculty can help influence students’ information seeking behavior
Before we begin...

• a word on generalizations
The Millennials

- Relationship to parents
- Trained to be doers and achievers
- Tremendous consumers
- Technology veterans
- Increasingly diverse
A look at what we’re seeing...

• Break into buzz groups
  – Briefly talk about what happens when you give students an assignment that requires them to do research.
    • What sources do they use to conduct the research?
    • What’s the quality or the sources?
So what does research tell us?

• Most popular source for undergraduate research: The Internet!!!

• The internet is as popular or even more popular with faculty

Lippincott & Kyrillidou, 2004
De Rosa, 2005
Satisfaction with their Searching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>65%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

De Rosa, 2005
Where are they learning about sources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links from electronic information sources or websites</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Professor</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Media</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online News</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference from a library website</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

De Rosa, 2005
Impact on Research

• Citing more than ever
  - Convenience
  - “Good enough”

Davis, 2003
A little more complex

• Students believe they can find the information they want on the web.
• Yet they also realize the web doesn’t meet all their needs.

De Rosa, 2005
Shouldn’t be a Surprise

• Starts early
Faculty, the Web and Student Research

- Love/Hate Relationship
- Perception Gap
- The Missing Filter
What To Do?

- Clear and enforceable guidelines
- Study at Cornell
  - Number of citations decreased
  - Number of scholarly resources cited increased
What To Do?

• Introduce new kinds of resources
  - Don’t assume
  - Force their hand
What To Do?

• Introduce new kinds of resources
  - Go for a systematic approach
    • At GVSU
      - Natural Resource Management
      - Advertising and Public Relations
What to do?

• What’s working with your students?


