Lesson Proper for Week 4

Beginning an Online Search

To trace the good and the bad, let's follow the trail of one student, Sherri James, who has decided, because she is a competitive swimmer, to investigate the use of drugs for enhancing one's athletic performance in the pool—not that she wants to try drugs but rather to educate herself and produce a research paper at the same time.

Probably the first thing most of you do, like Sherri James, is visit your favorite search engine, such as Ask, Bing, Google, Dogpile, or Yahoo!. At the search window, Sherri James typed "fitness and drugs." Among the listed sites, she was directed to a few commercial sites (*.com*). They each wanted to sell something—power supplements, a carb-electrolyte drink, and cybergenics nutritional products and instructional videos. One site advertised steroids for sale, such as Epogen and Erythropoietin. For Sherri James, these Internet locations offered no information, except to suggest this note that she jotted into her research journal:

With supplements, drugs, and even steroids readily available on websites, it's no wonder so many athletes get caught in the "quick -fix" bodybuilding trap.

To refine her Internet search, Sherri James decided to try an online directory search. By entering her topic "fitness + drugs" into the browser for **Yahoo! Directory**, she found hyperlinks to the following websites:

Doping and Sports - collective expert assessment on doping by bicyclists

Drugs in Sport - provides information on performance-enhancing drugs in sport, the latest articles on the subject, reports, resources, and useful websites

CHECKLIST

Evaluating Online Sources

The Internet and other online sources supply huge amounts of material, some of it excellent and some not so good. You must make judgments about the validity and veracity of these materials. In addition to your commonsense judgment, here are a few guidelines:

1. Prefer the *.edu* and *.org* sites. Usually, these are domains developed by an educational institution, such as Ohio State University, or by a professional organization, such as the American Philosophical Association. Of course, *.edu* sites also include many student papers, which can include unreliable information.
2. The *.gov* (government) and *.mil* (military) sites are generally considered to be reliable, but look closely at any information that involves politically sensitive materials.
3. The *.com* (commercial) sites are generally developed by for-profit organizations. Keep in mind that (a) they are selling advertising space, (b) they often charge you for access to their files, (c) they can be ISP sites (Internet Service Provider) that people pay to use and to post their "material." Although some *.com* sites contain good information (for example, reputable newspaper and magazine sites), use these sites with caution unless you can verify their reliability.
4. Look for the *professional* affiliation of the writer, which you will find in the opening credits or an e-mail address. Search for the writer's home page: Type the writer's name into a search engine to see how many results are listed, including a list of his or her books. If you find no information on the writer, you will need to rely on a sponsored website. That is, if the site is not sponsored by an organization or institution, you should probably abandon the source and look elsewhere.
5. Look for a bibliography that accompanies the article, which will indicate the scholarly nature of this writer's work.
6. Usenet discussion groups offer valuable information at times, but some articles lack sound, fundamental reasoning, or evidence to support the opinions.
7. Look for the timeliness of the information on the site. Check dates of publication and how often the information is updated.
8. Treat e-mail messages as mail, not scholarly articles. A similar rule applies to chat.
9. Does the site contain hypertext links to other professional sites or to commercial sites? Links to other educational sites serve as a modern bibliography to more reliable sources. Links to commercial sites are often attempts to sell you something.
10. Learn to distinguish from among the different types of websites, such as advocacy pages, personal home pages, informational pages, and business and marketing pages.

Reading an Online Address

Following is some information to help you understand online addresses. In the library, you must employ a book's call number to find it. On the Internet, you employ a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). Most URLs include the server www for World Wide Web, which is the global Internet service that connects the multitude of computers and the Internet files. Others are like this one for psychology from Pearson Higher Education: http://catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk/educator/discipline/

Psychology/91094438.page

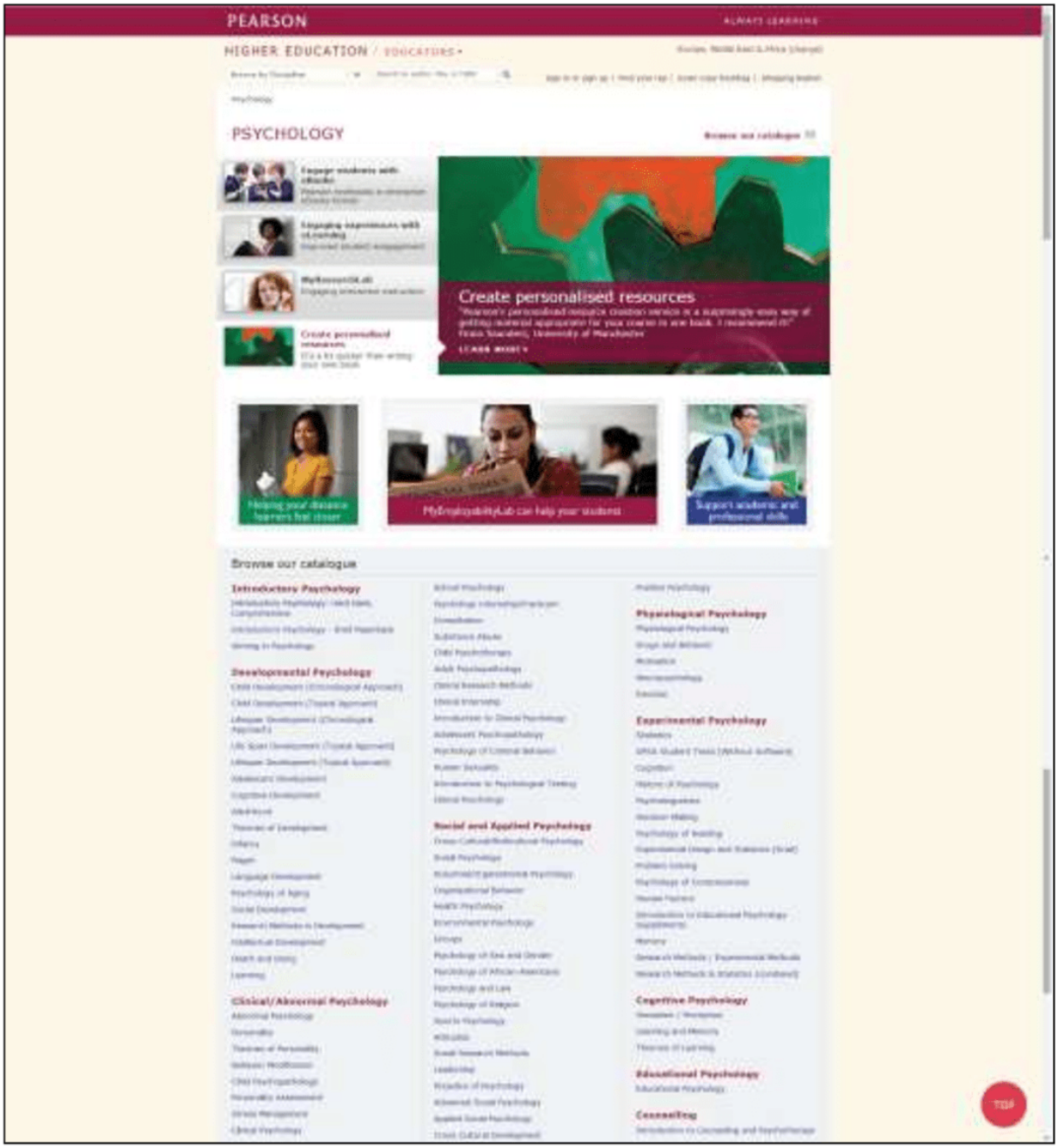

Figure 4.1 Psychology website from Pearson Higher Education.

- The *protocol* (http://) transmits data.
- The *domain* (catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk) names the organization feeding information into the server with a *suffix* to label the type of organization: *.co* (commercial), *.edu* (educational), *.gov* (government), *.mil* (military), *.net* (network organization), and *.org* (organization).
- The *directory/file* (educator/discipline/Psychology) finds one of the server's directories and then a specific file.
- The *hypertext markup language* (html) names the computer language used to write the file.

Often, knowing just the protocol and the server. Domain will get you to a home site from which you can search deeper for files.

The URL http://catalogue.pearsoned.co.uk/educator/discipline/Psychology/91094438.page will take you to the psychology page for Pearson Higher Education (see Figure 4.1), where you can examine a specific directory, such as theories of counseling or abnormal psychology.

Using Keyword and Boolean Expressions

When you use **keywords** to locate sources, you enter words and phrases in the search field of a database or Internet search engine to help you reduce the number of results. Keywords are the descriptors or identifying words in a source's main title, or terms that the author has identified as significant. Selecting keywords that are relevant to your topic will help to narrow your search results. To make your keyword searches even more efficient, you can also use guided keyword search options to combine search elements, group terms, or select indexes or fields to be searched.

Using a search engine's **advanced** or **custom search** tool lets you narrow your keyword searches by answering prompts on an onscreen menu. This type of guided search can be used to select a range of dates for publications, such as "after 2011" or "between 2010 and 2014." You can also narrow your search results by format, such as only looking for certain file types.

HINT: One way to locate sources that are scholarly is to search for sites within the *.edu* domain. Scholarly sources can also be located using a specialized search engine like Google Scholar.

Using Boolean expressions or Boolean operators with keywords lets you focus your search even more by stipulating which words and phrases *can* appear in the results, which words *must* appear, or which terms *must not* appear in the search results. Most electronic databases and Internet search engines allow you to use Boolean search expressions, specifically *AND* or the + ("plus") symbol, *NOT* or the – ("minus") symbol, and *OR.* Placed between keywords, Boolean expressions instruct the search engine to display only those websites in which your research terms appear in certain combinations, and to ignore others. Figure 4.2 shows the results of a keyword search using Boolean expressions.

- AND (+): This operator narrows the search by retrieving only records that contain all terms connected by it. Most search engines, such as Google and Yahoo!, will assume you want to enter AND or (+) between a string of terms even if you don't use the Boolean expression.

Example: **food dye** is searched as **food** + **dye.**

Example: **food** + **dye** + **ADHD** will only list websites that contain all three terms.

- NOT(–): This identifier excludes sites that contain the specified word or phrase. Using the term NOT or (–) finds sources that include one term but not the other. For example, if you want to eliminate "cancer" from your search about hyperactivity caused by food dye, add the word NOT before that term.

Example: **food AND dye AND hyperactivity NOT cancer**

- OR: Using "OR" broadens your search boundaries to include records containing more than one keyword. For example, if you want to expand your search to include sources about food dye's connection to hyperactivity, or its relationship to allergies, use the expression "OR" in your search.

Example: **food AND dye AND hyperactivity OR allergy**

- Quotation marks (“”): Placing search terms inside quotation marks will signal the database or search engine to look for an exact phrase. Placing a phrase or term inside quotation marks will exclude sources that don’t contain the exact phrase.

Example: **“food dye” AND “hyperactive children”**

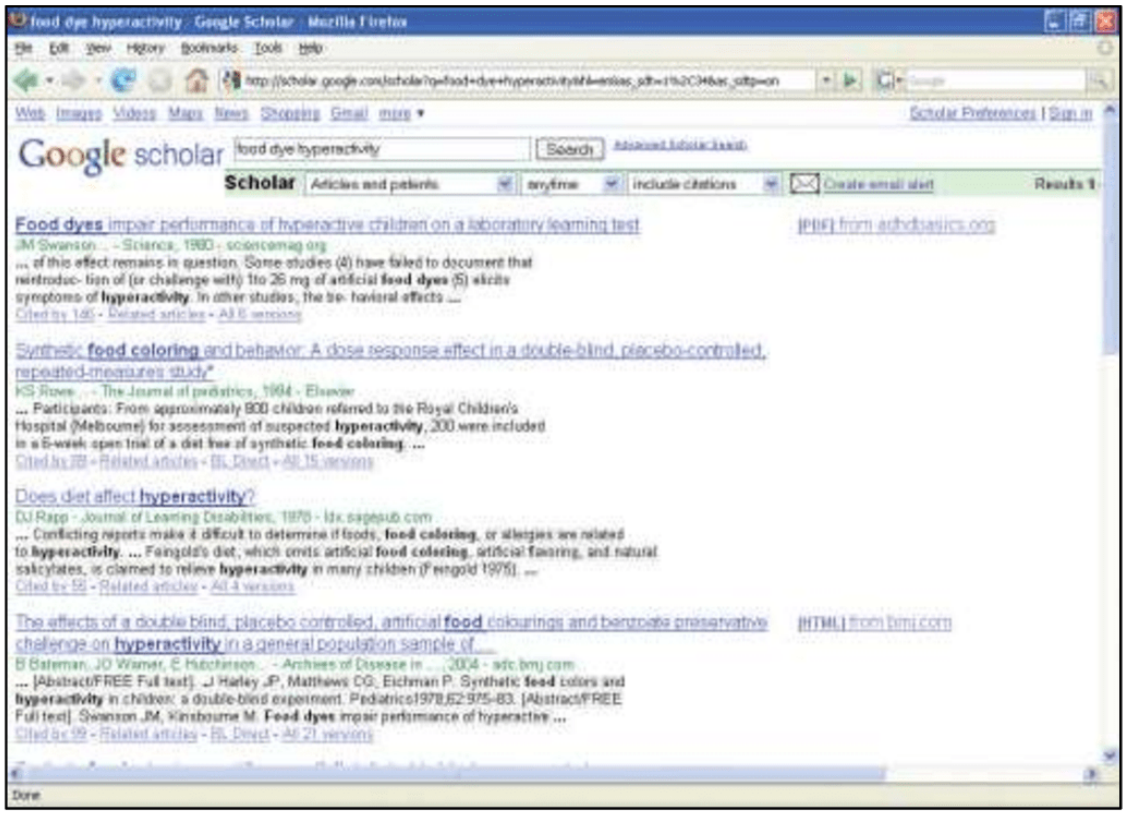

Figure 4.2 The results of a keyword search using Boolean operators on Google Scholar.

Wildcard searches use symbols to search for the various forms of a basic, root word. Rather than conducting several searches for the same basic word—such as *child, children, childhood,* and so on—you can focus your keyword search to find a term with variant spelling or endings by using an asterisk (*) or a question mark (?) as the wildcard or truncation symbol.

The asterisk (*) usually takes the place of one or more characters at the end of a word.

Example: **diet*** Results: **diet, diets, dietary, dietician, dietetics**

The question mark (?) usually takes the place of a single character in a word.

Example: **ne?t** Results: **neat, nest, next**

Some databases and search engines use different wildcard symbols such as (!), ($), or (:). Consult the help section in the database or Internet search site to learn which wildcard symbols are supported.

Subject Directory Search Engines

Subject directory search engines are human compiled and indexed to guide you to general areas that are then subdivided to specific categories. Your choices control the list. Sites like About, Lycos, and Yahoo! Contain directories arranged by topic. You can use a keyword search or click on one of the topic categories, such as Finance, to go deeper into the Web directories.

Robot-Driven Search Engines

Another set of engines responds to a keyword by electronically scanning millions of Web pages. Your keywords will control the size of the list at sites such as Bing, AltaVista, Google, Go, and HotBot.

Metasearch Engines

A metasearch examines your topic in several of the search engines listed previously. Thus, you need not search each engine separately. For example, when you enter a query at the Mamma website, the engine simultaneously queries about ten of the major robot-driven search engines. It then provides you with a short, relevant set of results. You will get fewer results than might appear at one of the major search engines. For example, the request for "chocolate + children" produced 170,000,000 results on AltaVista but only 100 on Mamma.com. A metasearch engine gives you a focused list of sites. The metasearch engine selects the first few listings from each of the other engines under the theory that each engine puts the most relevant sites at the top of its list; however, some commercial sites are able to buy their way to the top of various lists. Consider using a metasearch engine such as Dogpile, Mamma, Metacrawler, or Surfwax.

Specialized Search Engines

Other search engines specialize in one area, such as WWWomen (women's studies), TribalVoice (Native American studies), and Bizweb (business studies). In addition, many websites, such as the Library of Congress and New York Times Online, have search engines just for themselves.

Educational Search Engines

Educational search engines provide subject indexes for the various disciplines (humanities, sciences) and for subtopics under those headings (history, literature, biochemistry, and so on). Try several, because they will take you to academic material, not commercial sites with advertising banners popping up all over the screen:

English Server	Iseek
Internet Public Library	ERIC
ProQuest K–12	Scirus

Library of Congress	Intute
Discovery Channel	Voice of the Shuttle

Educational Search Engines Maintained by Libraries

Here's a list of excellent sites that provide valuable academic information: BUBL Link, Internet Public Library, and Internet Scout.

Hint: Most Web browsers include a Bookmark or Favorites tool to save addresses for quick access. When you find a file you want to access later, create a bookmark so you can revisit it with just a click of the mouse. In Microsoft Internet Explorer, use the button bar marked Favorites to make your bookmarks. *Note*: If you are working at a university computer laboratory, do not add bookmarks to the hard drive. Instead, save the bookmarks to your flash drive or personal drop box by using Save As in the File menu.

Using RSS and Social Bookmarking

Searching the Internet opens a door to countless sources you can use for your research, including journals, periodicals, blogs, and wikis. After you have generated a list of useful sources, though, it can be difficult and time consuming to keep up with the latest news and developments related to your topic. One great way to simplify this part of your research is to use RSS (Rich Site Summary).

RSS Feeds

You can use RSS to set up a document called a *Web feed* using software known as a reader. There are many free online readers available, such as Google Reader, CNET, and Bloglines. These readers allow you to "subscribe" to the news feeds on your favorite sites and receive updated material from all of those sites on one Web page.

Web 2.0 and Social Bookmarking

Web 2.0 refers to websites and applications that utilize user-generated content for end users. Web 2.0 is used in many websites today, chiefly focusing on user interactivity and collaboration. Web 2.0 also focused on providing more universal network connectivity and communication channels.

Social bookmarking is the process of tagging a website page with a browser-based tool so that you can easily visit it again later. Instead of saving social media posts to your browser bookmarks, you can use different platforms' features to bookmark posts. Because the bookmarks are online, you'll be able to

access them anywhere, from any device with an internet connection.

How does social bookmarking work?

In social bookmarking sites, discussion topics are organized into specific rooms or threads where users follow content that's interesting to them. When following a piece of content, you'll receive notifications to your personal feed when new information appears. Links in social bookmarking sites are the starting point for discussion and knowledge-sharing. This makes social sites an excellent location for finding social media inspiration, earning backlinks and networking with potential influencers.

Some popular social networking tools include:

- Pinterest
- Reddit
- Digg

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2nd Semester Enrollment

Activities

- Assignments
- Forums
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