

Topics



Age category



15+

Group size



up to 20

Time



45 minutes

16 Search

Topics: **media literacy,**
digital citizenship

Recommended age group: 15+

Participants count: up to 20 participants

Activity duration: 45 minutes

Methods of education: group work, discussion, reflection

Aims of the activity:

- search the web for information using the right keywords,

- name the ways in which companies present themselves on the Internet,

- assess the credibility of the information we work with,

- explain the advantages and disadvantages of using Internet search engines,

- describe how the internet browser works.

Equipment: list of companies to search, internet access, computer/ notebook/ tablet to each group, writing utensils, flipchart and markers for the final summary

Keywords: internet search engine, public control, credibility of information

Activity process:

1. Imagine a situation where 25 years ago you were given the task of writing a work on the modern history of India. You do not have an internet connection, Internet search engines do not exist and you can find only a few up-to-date information about contemporary India on the Internet. The only current book in the library is unavailable, and the one you have available is from the 1950s. This is a real situation that students faced during this period. *How would you accomplish this task?*

We can ask this question to the participants as an introduction to the topic. Then we ask them another question: *How would you solve the assigned task today? Where and how would you look for information?*

2. In the present we already have enough information. The easiest way to find them is to enter keywords into Internet search engines. However, the information we get to first is not necessarily a fact. It can be modified according to the needs of the person who published the information on the Internet. That's why it's important to know what information we need to get before we enter keywords. We will

divide the participants into groups of 2-3 members and prepare a suitable work environment. We will introduce them to a task that they have 30 minutes to complete.

Choose one company from the list (or it can be chosen by the lecturer) and find as much information as possible on the Internet:

1. *How does the company present itself on social networks? Does it use influencer services? (We are not interested in specific information, but rather in the range of information we can find.)*

2. *What kind of critical response does the company face from the public? Can we also find not too flattering information about the company, shortcomings of products/services and how the company responds to public criticism?*

The participants will present the results of their work in groups in the final discussion.

Final analysis:

As part of the final analysis of the activity, we will first reflect on the work in groups. We find out how the participants cooperated, whether they are satisfied with the result of the work, etc. We will then invite the participants to share with each other the information as well as the most interesting findings that they found and answer the questions asked in the task. Participants can describe the procedure used, the difficulties in completing the task, or what would help them improve the result. The final reflection is to explain the term “search engine” and how it works.

Questions for reflection:

- *What search engines and keywords did you use? Why?*
- *Why do you think internet search engines were created?*
- *How does the search engine work?*
- *What information did you see first? What do you think, why?*
- *Was the information you found true?*

Tips for companies: Coca-Cola, iPhone, Nescafé, Adidas, McDonald's, Škoda Auto, ...

Public control (controversial topics): recycling, sustainability, support of sport/education, ...

Activity variations:

- The lecturer can choose one company - the same one for all groups. In this case, the information obtained will be quite similar and will be repeated, but at the same time it will be possible to compare it. Finally, it is advised to discuss the information obtained.

Source: KUDRNA, D., PERICHTA, M. V *DIGITÁLNÍM SVĚTĚ: VYHLEDÁVAČE*, JSNS.CZ, 03/2021. Available at: <https://www.jsns.cz/nove-aktivita/v-digitalnim-svete-vyhledavace/aktivita_v-digitalnim-svetevyhledavace_01_otazky-a-odpovedi.pdf>

Materials for the lecturer / participants

An Internet search engine is a service that allows us to work with the Internet to search for information. Previously, people had to remember the exact addresses of websites because they lacked a tool that would allow them to search or browse individual websites one by one. However, there were more and more websites and this way of browsing the Internet quickly became impractical. Thus, Internet search engines were created primarily to make searching the Internet more efficient and convenient. As users, we enter keywords into search engines and we receive the results that the search engine system evaluated as the most appropriate.

How does the search engine work?

Search results are sorted by algorithms and everyone sees different results for the same keywords. Behind this is a search algorithm that tries to tailor search results “to” the person asking. There are two reasons for this:

- they make the internet more attractive to users because it is easier to find what we need;
- It's about profit. Much of the revenue of Internet companies comes from advertising, which, like search results, is personalized.

The better the search engine manages to offer us relevant content, the more time we spend on the Internet. This will also give Internet companies more room to push advertising.

How to refine your search?

The more accurate the question, the more relevant the answer of the search engines. One-word searches may not be enough, so it is better to be more specific when searching in order to narrow the portfolio of answers and filter out less relevant ones. These more complex entries are created in search engines using the correct search syntax and operators. In this way, we can refine the input by adding additional keywords (AND operator), selecting some of them (OR operator), or, for example, excluding sites according to certain rules. At the same time, we can set the answer to be limited to a certain file type, text placement, location in a specific URL, or further specify whether the keyword appears in the metadata or whether an element occurs in a certain range. In addition to the syntax and operators, a limit can be set in settings to a specific language or time period.