

This unit I compared and contrasted the two literary website tor.com and also microcosms.com. They're both easy to upload your own work on, while Tor has a large user base and Microcosms has a very small user base. Both have great resources for writers and readers alike to understand two different craft areas, one focusing heavily on science fiction and one focusing on flash fiction.

**Compare and Contrast:** Both Tor.com and Microcosms.com are set up similarly, with the newest information at the top and you scroll down to get to the oldest. Both have a bar at the top guiding you where you want and other information to the right that might interest you, like links to social media. Very similar basic design. Where they diverge in design is that Tor has a much more complex set up and is very professionally created. It is much more user friendly when it comes to searching for information on the website from different genres of stories to authors, and even information on being published through them. Microcosms isn't as pleasing, only having one photo on the front page, which is also strangely cropped. Searching for things on the website isn't hard but the search bar is on the right side of the page, out of the way when you first open it up and making it hard to spot. It does have an easy to access FAQ page that would really be helpful for Tor to put up on their tool bar, since just submitting work through each one can be a little bit of a hassle.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** Tor.com is very strong in its design and guiding users to the stories that they want to read. It also does a good job of promoting its writers no matter how well known they are, they just want everyone to enjoy what they read. One thing they could do better is have their information about how their website runs at the top of the page, rather than stuck at the bottom, since it doesn't seem like a platform you can post on, when it actually is. On the other hand, Microcosms is a website that tells you right away that it is a contest based flash fiction website that is easy to post for each contest and even get judged each week. They have troubles of keeping an archive though, which isn't as nice when you want to look back on past works from various people. If they had an archive that wasn't the home page it would be a much more user friendly website.

## Scenarios

1. A student is interested in working with flash fiction and may want some resources to read, so they go to Microcosms to read what others have written for each contest's prompt, and the student is inspired to write for the next contest and get feedback on their work from the judges of the week.
2. A teacher wants to have a short science fiction unit in their creative writing class, so they suggest that each student finds a story and give a short presentation on it. Tor.com has many different types of science fiction genres so students who aren't as interested in it may find something close to what they like to read and want to present on the story. With

the website being easy to use the students are also all able to access each story to read later if they want.

### **Comments**

Tarah, I agree that both websites are very user-friendly. Overall I liked the University of Hartford's research system because they do that the tutorial that could be a really nice starting point, but you are right that the 3 side bar menus are a little much at some times. Prince George's research tools are also really nice, especially the use of videos throughout the entire research process. Both seem like great research tools for people of all ages looking for websites that help a lot.

Caitlin, I think that your comparison is really nice. I think that it's great that you chose two towns not too far away from each other to really compare and contrast them as well. I think your evaluation on the two websites is correct as well, that Greenwood has a better website for everyone, not just residents. What really caught my eye is the menus for visitors that is very friendly and welcoming. The city of Mcgee looks like a nice place but their website needs some help. since it does not seem to highlight its great qualities.