But My Teacher Said I Couldn't Use the Internet!

Livermore Public Library's online databases vs. the Web

The Internet is a collection of links, connected to each other but not overseen by anybody. Anyone with a computer can publish on the Web. The databases subscribed to by The Livermore Public Library are only delivered by Web technology. What's in them is not available on the open Web. The databases were selected by librarians because their content is provided by reliable publishers.

	SUBSCRIPTION DATABASES	INTERNET
CONTENT	• Published by reliable companies, like book, magazine, and journal publishers • Has been checked by editors • Includes full text of many articles that the library no longer has in print format	• The good, the bad, the ugly and the crazy stuff that's out there
UNIQUENESS OF INFORMATION	• Most of what you find on the databases is not available elsewhere unless you pay for it. Access is not available through Google or the other search engines. • Some publishers are no longer providing information in a printed format. The only way to get the information now is through an online database.	• The Internet does have some excellent information, including some information that is not available anywhere else. You just have to be willing to sort through the information and determine what is reliable.
HOW CLOSE TO THE TOPIC ARE THE RESULTS?	• Generally, the results you get are very relevant.	• Search engines have their own rules about what comes up first, often influenced by advertising dollars. • Publishers of websites can manipulate their pages so that they come up high on your search, even if the content isn't what you want
SEARCHING	• Use flexible methods, allowing you to do things like limit the date from the main search page	• Uses search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN. • You need to use advanced searching to do most of the things the databases offer in general search.

Livermore Public Library's online databases vs. the Web, cont.

PURPOSE	• The information provided in the databases was written by reporters, researchers, and others. Some of it was written to inform, some of it to amuse, and some of it because scientists need to publish their work. • Publishers published it to make money, after determining that it was reliable enough to stake their reputations on.	• Web sites are also made for a variety of purposes, including to inform, persuade, or make money. Sometimes they get put up as a hoax or joke.
NUMBER OF RESULTS	• Depending on the search, can be a lot. A search on the periodical database InfoTrac OneFile for endangered species = 1,981 full-text articles, sorted with the most recent articles first.	• Often too much to search through. A Google search on endangered species = 26,900,000 hits. Who wants to sort through all that?
COST	• The Library paid for these database subscriptions so that you have access to them free of charge. You can use them in the library or from home with a library card.	• Mostly free—but not always.

Bottom line: these databases are not the same as the Web; they only use the Web as a delivery system. If your teacher states that you can only use one Internet source, the Library's databases should not count as that Internet source.

Livermore Public Library staff can come to your class and show you and your teachers what's available to you and some good ways to use the databases. Contact your local branch for more information.

You need a library card to use these databases outside the library. To get a library card:
Go to our website at http://www.ci.livermore.ca.us/library/LPLcard.pdf, fill out the form and come to any branch with identification showing your name and current address. We also have forms in all libraries. You'll be able to check material out and use the databases as soon as you have your card.

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