Site Credibility

Grade Level: 4-8

Objectives:
1. During an in-class activity, students will be able to identify and classify sources of information for validity according to the source.
2. Through the use of a concept map, students will be able to list reasons why web pages should be evaluated for their validity and effectiveness.
3. Through the use of classroom computers, students will be able to evaluate and rank a variety of web pages based on the criteria on a given rubric.
4. In a writing sample in their journals, students will summarize pros and cons of each web site that is evaluated.
5. During an in class presentation using the overhead, students will work with partners to distinguish between one web site that is valid and reliable and one site containing non reliable sources.

Materials:
Three short news briefs (from resource provided, or fabricated by the teacher), story from www.urbanlegends.com, rubric for evaluating websites (copied for students), URL's of websites for use in whole-group activity (previewed by teacher), overhead projector, overhead projector sheets, overhead markers for students, computers with internet connections, projector for computer

Procedures:
1. Write the words “trustworthy” and “reliable” on the board. As a group, brainstorm what these words mean, how they are related, and what kinds of things might display those characteristics. Group these items into a concept map.
2. Using the overhead as a visual aid, read three short news briefs that you heard that very day (the teacher can fabricate these). After reading each one, tell the source of that information. The sources to be used for the stories include: a child on the bus, an unknown adult in the school, and the principal. Students should discuss with members of their table groups and agree on one of the choices to select as a reliable source of information. Students should tell why they made their selection.
3. Using a story that is too far fetched to believe, the teacher reads a story that was found on www.urbanlegends.com. The teacher shares that the information was indeed obtained from the internet. Students discuss in small groups, and then report to the class reasons why sites should be evaluated for validity and user friendliness.
4. Using a computer with an internet connection and a projector hooked up to it, the teacher will select a web site and evaluate the site using the given rubric. Students should help and this will serve as an example for the students to view.
5. Using the same rubric as demonstrated before; students will work with partners to evaluate three web sites.
6. Students will work with partners to write summaries in journals of their evaluations of three web sites. They should include pros and cons of each of the three sites visited.
7. Students will work with partners to prepare an overhead sheet with a brief description of two web sites they evaluated. They must be prepared to discuss which of the two sites was more credible and user friendly.

Closing:
Remind students that there are not any requirements that have to be met for someone to post a website; therefore, it is crucial that they always check the credibility, accuracy and currency of a website. Ask them to think about how this will change the way in which they surf the web. If the time and technology are available, the Jo Cool/Jo Fool game on the website below is a good supplemental activity to this lesson.

Supplemental Website:
http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/games/joecool_joefool/jo_cool_teachers.cfm

Indiana Academic Standards

Grade 4: Language Arts:
4.2.4 Evaluate new information and hypotheses (statements of theories or assumptions) by testing them against known information and ideas.
4.2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.
4.2.6 Distinguish between cause and effect and between fact and opinion in informational text.
4.7.7 Emphasize points in ways that help the listener or viewer follow important ideas and concepts.
4.7.10 Evaluate the role of the media in focusing people’s attention on events and in forming their opinions on issues.

Grade 5: Language Arts:
5.2.1 Use the features of informational texts, such as formats, graphics, diagrams, illustrations, charts, maps, and organization, to find information and support understanding.
5.2.3 Recognize main ideas presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.
5.2.4 Distinguish among facts, supported inferences, and opinions in text.
5.3.7 Evaluate the author’s use of various techniques to influence readers’ perspectives.
5.7.4 Select a focus, organizational structure, and point of view for an oral presentation.
5.7.5 Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence and examples.
5.7.8 Analyze media as sources for information, entertainment, persuasion, interpretation of events, and transmission of culture.

Grade 6: Language Arts:
6.2.1 Identify the structural features of popular media (newspapers, magazines, online information) and use the features to obtain information.
6.2.6 Determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the evidence presented for an author’s conclusions and evaluate whether the author adequately supports inferences.

6.2.8 Note instances of persuasion, propaganda, and faulty reasoning in text.

6.7.6 Support opinions with researched, documented evidence and with visual or media displays that use appropriate technology.

6.7.9 Identify persuasive and propaganda techniques used in electronic media (television, radio, online sources) and identify false and misleading information.

Grade 7:

**Language Arts:**

7.2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and purpose between various categories of informational materials (such as textbooks, newspapers, and instructional or technical manuals).

7.2.4 Identify and trace the development of an author’s argument, point of view, or perspective in text.

7.2.6 Assess the adequacy, accuracy, and appropriateness of the author’s evidence to support claims and assertions, noting instances of bias and stereotyping.

7.2.4 Arrange supporting details, reasons, descriptions, and examples effectively.

7.7.1 Use speaking techniques — including adjustments of tone, volume, and timing of speech; enunciation (clear speech); and eye contact — for effective presentations.

7.7.1 Analyze the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism; identify the techniques used to achieve the effects.

7.7.1 Deliver persuasive presentations that:

- state a clear position in support of an argument or proposal.
- describe the points in support of the proposal and include supporting evidence.

Grade 8:

**Language Arts:**

8.2.1 Compare and contrast the features and elements of consumer materials to gain meaning from documents.

8.2.6 Evaluate the logic, internal consistency, and structural patterns of text.

8.7.2 Match the message, vocabulary, voice modulation (changes in tone), expression, and tone to the audience and purpose.

8.7.6 Use audience feedback, including both verbal and nonverbal cues, to reconsider and modify the organizational structure and/or to rearrange words and sentences for clarification of meaning.

8.7.9 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual image makers (such as graphic artists, illustrators, and news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.
News Briefs

1. We’re having a tornado drill and after that we’re going to have a field trip to someplace really cool. Plus I heard that there was going to be a famous person coming to school today, but there was a bomb threat so they couldn’t make it. (source – school bus conversations)

2. Our school is the best one around. We had the highest test scores and will probably win an award. You will get to have a HUGE party to celebrate. (source- an unknown adult that is passing through)

3. We are going to have a celebration for a job well done this year. We did very well our standardized tests. We will have a pep rally on Friday afternoon to recognize this accomplishment. Also, be on the alert- we may have a storm drill this week. Be sure you know where you would go! (source- principal)
Web Site Evaluation Rubric
Modified from “Web Evaluation for Intermediate Grades” developed by Tammy Payton. Original rubric can be found at http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/edu/rubric2.htm

Name of Site:

URL:

Type of Site (personal website, organization’s website, government website, company’s website, etc.):

Purpose of Site (to give information to help you learn, to try to sell you something, to try to change your opinion about something, etc.):

Rate the website in the following areas using this scale:
1- Horrible
2- Poor
3- OK
4- Good
5- Excellent

Design of Website
Looks official (no spelling mistakes, clear format, good graphics) 1 2 3 4 5
Moves from page to page easily 1 2 3 4 5

Content:
Are there facts on the page that you were looking for? 1 2 3 4 5
Links to other websites are useful 1 2 3 4 5
Information is useful 1 2 3 4 5

Technical Elements:
All the links to other sites work 1 2 3 4 5
Page loads quickly 1 2 3 4 5
**Credibility:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author’s name and email address are given</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the organization sponsoring the page is given</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives a recent date for the last time the page was updated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your score:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the score that the website earned, and thinking about the type and purpose of the site, write a short reflection about why or why not this website is one on which you can find true information.