

Pathfinder

Forensics

Introduction

Using a search engine like Google to locate information for debate is quick and easy, and most likely is how most debaters begin research. Here are some ideas on how to refine your search techniques for better results and some ideas on how to take advantage of the information you can readily find.

Resources with scholarly journal articles, quotes and statistics offered by the CHS library are listed below. Ways to access information at UMSL, Washington University and St. Louis County Library are also discussed.

Using the Web to Locate Information

Using Wikipedia

Go to your Wikipedia result, scroll to the bottom and check to see if there are credible sources listed in Notes, References and External Links. Locate those sources online or with the help of your librarian at CHS, Ms. DeRigne 854-6648.

Wikipedia is trying to compete with Britannica Online, if a lock appears in the upper right-hand corner it indicates the entry is locked and is written and updated by a Wikipedia appointed expert. Nonetheless, educators do not consider Wikipedia a credible resource; but that doesn't mean people posting to entries aren't using good sources.

Using Fact Sites

Fact sites give you the facts on important news using quantitative analysis, graphics and short, tight exposition in one or two pages. They often provide links to supporting sources and emphasize “hard” news: politics, public policy debates, and national and international affairs.

FiveThirtyEight <http://fivethirtyeight.com/>

The New York Times' The Upshot <http://www.nytimes.com/upshot/>

Pew Research Center's Fact Tank <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/>

Vox <http://www.vox.com/>

Washington Post's Wonkblog <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/>

Limiting Google Searches

A good way to narrow results in Google to credible sources is by limiting results to government or education websites. This can be accomplished using the following technique: **"search term site:.edu" or "search term site:.gov"**. Using an example for flat tax, **"flat tax site:.gov"**. Using site:.edu and site:.gov at the same time may give unreliable results.

Using quotations to search as a phrase may be helpful too, "abolish electoral college." Combining phrased searching with site limiters is a good way to narrow results. For example, **"'animal rights' site:.edu."**

Gleaning Information from News Sources

Find good information in CNN, MSNCB or other news websites? Take the time to find what sources the reporter used, then go to those sources. Now you can take your quotes and evidence directly from experts the reporters use. In this CNN article, <http://tiny.cc/m9b15> about instituting a flat tax, a reporter refers to and quotes Diane Lim Rogers (of the Concord Coalition, a deficit watchdog group) and Jim Nunns (a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center). A quote from Jim Nunns, a senior fellow..., sounds more scholarly than a quote starting "according to CNN."

Using CHS Online Databases to Find Information and Locate Scholarly Articles

You will be automatically logged into databases from school. At home, log-in to district website, go to the CHS Library website, click on online database passwords on left-hand menu to see username and password for home access. Then click on online databases on CHS website to log-in to specific databases.

CQ Researcher is a great place to start your search. CQ stands for Congressional Quarterly; the database began as a collection of reports written by experts in their field for members of congress who needed background information on issues. Browse under Issue Tracker or Pro/Con to find topic reports and articles presenting both sides of an issue. The content in Issue Tracker includes Pro/Con, in addition there is Overview, Background, Chronology and other information.

Opposing Viewpoints also a great place to start. Browse under Issues or do a keyword search. Besides offering Viewpoints(Pro/Con), it has Statistics, Academic Journal articles, News and suggested websites for a variety of social issues.

EbscoHost Research Center is the portal to Academic Search Elite as well as other Ebsco databases. It's a good place to look for scholarly journal articles. Login and click the EbscoHost Databases link. Select All and Continue. Begin by entering a keyword search. Once your results appear, limit to Scholarly Journals by clicking "Full Text," "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals" and moving the slider to narrow to current year(s) on the left side bar menu. In Ebsco results list also get news and magazine articles by scrolling down to Source Types and selecting News and Periodicals.

JSTOR is mostly scholarly articles, as well as journal articles and books. Click on Advanced Search. Type in search terms in boxes. You may choose for your keywords to show up in "full-text" meaning the word will appear somewhere in the article OR select item title, meaning the terms will show up in the title of the article. This is helpful if your search results in thousands of articles when selecting "full-text" search. You may also check the box "article" to limit results to only articles (not book reviews, etc). And put in date range of article publication or specific journals by discipline.

Sources to use to Locate Statistics

One of the best sources for statistics is the current issue of *The World Almanac* available in our library and St. Louis County library. The *Almanac* provides current statistics on the economy, health issues, family demographics, crime, education, etc.

Another great source for statistics, already mentioned in the Databases portion above, is the *Opposing Viewpoints* database.

Through the MoreNet databases, the *Business & Company Resource* database will give you great statistics on companies and industries. You can see company earnings, rankings and industry snapshots.

Check government websites for statistics: Census Bureau, etc. You can also search <http://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/> for a variety of agency statistics on a wide range of topics (alcohol consumption to influenza to economic stats).

<http://stateline.org> is a fantastic government website that gives you information on any state's current political issues and policy updates.

On the left-hand menu of the CHS Library links on the CHS Library website, click on "curriculum links" to find a plethora of reliable websites for statistics and links to curricular subject websites.

Reference Books of Quotations

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations, ed. Elizabeth Knowles

The Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, ed. John Bartlett

Compact Research Series of books in the library has a chapter on quotes dealing with current issues, such as biomedical ethics, animal experimentation, etc. For current topics, search reliable newspaper and magazine sources for articles on your subject and draw quotes from those articles.

Washington University and St. Louis County Library or St. Louis Public Library

We are part of the InfoPass program that allows students to check out material and use databases at Olin Library-Washington University. Please see Ms. DeRigne in the CHS Library for information and a pass.

We encourage all of you to obtain a public library card to take advantage of books and databases they have that we may not. St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis County Library, and University City Public Library all have branches close to Clayton High School.