Searching the WWW

Locating the right information on the WWW requires effort
Looking In the Right Place

The WWW is not the first place to look

- Go directly to a site -- www.irs.gov
- Go to the library -- www.lib.washington.edu
- Go for the kind of information you want -- www.npr.org

Guessing a site’s URL is often very easy, making it a fast way to find information.

Ask, “What site provides this information?”
Search Engines

No one controls what’s published on the WWW ... it is totally decentralized

To find out, search engines crawl Web

* Two parts
  * *Crawler* visits Web pages building an *index* of the content
  * *Query processor* checks user requests against the index, reports on known pages

Only a fraction of the Web’s content is crawled
Boolean Queries

Search Engine words are independent

* Words don’t have to occur together

- To be explicit about occurrences use Boolean queries and quotes
  - Logical Operators: AND, OR, NOT
    - monet AND water AND lilies
    - “van gogh” OR gauguin
    - vermeer AND girl AND NOT pearl
Searching strategies …

* Limit by top level domains or format
* Find terms most specific to topic
* Look elsewhere for key words, e.g. bio
* Use exact phrase only when universal
* If too many hits, requery
* "Search within results" using "-"
* Once found, ask if site is best source
Truth on the Web

- Much Web information is wrong
- Using the Web effectively means recognizing quality information
  - Information from reliable organizations is usually preferred -- check out ownership
  - Look for accuracy, currency, ...
  - Follow links to verify that the content supports the original page

Best: Locate independent verification
The Burmese Mountain Dog

Burmese Mountain Dog Guarding

Gawdawpalin Temple

The Burmese Mountain Dog is a medium sized, muscular dog originally bred in Burma (Myanmar) to guard Buddhist temples. It was bred to guard the temples, and keep the temples free of rodents and beggars. It is also known as the Burmese Temple Dog. In 1954, a group of Burmese Opera Lords set up a standard for the Burmese Mountain Dog which has remained virtually unchanged ever since. The Burmese Mountain Dog Club of America was established in 1985 to foster the breed in the United States and the world.

So you want to own a Burmese Mountain Dog?

- The Burmese Mountain Dog is a breed of dog able to guard, ferret small game, and protect property.
- The Burmese Mountain Dogs are remarkably clean dogs. They are easy to keep as they are rarely noisy or
True Site, Bogus Implication

DHMO.org

Welcome to the website for the Dihydrogen Monoxide Research Division (DMRD), currently located in Newark, Delaware. The controversy surrounding dihydrogen monoxide has never been more widely debated, and the goal of this site is to provide an unbiased data clearinghouse and a forum for public discussion.

Explore our many Special Reports, including the DHMO FAQ, a definitive primer on the subject, plus reports on the environment, cancer, current research, and an insider.

DHMO Related Info:

- Media
- Press coverage
- National Consumer Coalition Against DHMO
- Green Party, New Zealand
- Environmental Protection Agency
- NIH National Toxicology Program

www.dhmo.org
Most intellectual property (IP) is protected

* You can’t use it unless you pay the creator
* IP: movies, songs, performances, photos, Web pages, sculptures, ...
* Penalties are severe ...

You can’t publish stuff off Web, e.g. photos, w/o authorization – pub domain, allowed, permission
Copyright

Applies to writings, photos, programs,…

* No © notice is required
* More rights than copying
* Noncommercial use is no excuse
* Penalties are huge: $100,000 each
* Fair use is for worthy uses (education)
* See Chapter 12, pp.353-358

Bottom line: Use your own intellect to create your own intellectual property … that way you’re paid
Page Rank

Millions of hits make no difference if the one you want is buried in the list

* Google solves this using page rank
* A page’s rank is based on the number of pages that reference it and their rank
* Page rank is Google’s measure of importance
* Pages are listed in decreasing rank
Google Whacking is a game for people with no social life …

- Find a pair of words which have only one Google hit
- Search googlwhack for lists
- If you list your GW on your Web page, guess what …!
Google’s page rank can be affected by users … the Google Bomb

* Many users using a common term to link to a site (<a href=…>term</a>) force it to be listed first in a Google search …

* “miserable failure” has George W Bush’s biography as the first hit