Misinformation abounds on the Web

Searching the WWW

Locating the right information on the WWW requires effort

Looking In the Right Place

Google is not the first place to look!
- Go directly to a Web site -- www.irs.gov
  Guessed a site’s URL is often very easy, making it a fast way to find information
- Go to right site -- dictionary.cambridge.org
- Go to the library -- www.lib.washington.edu
- Go for the kind of information you want -- www.npr.org
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 (stored in a database)
  - 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
- 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

Demonstrations

- Google Images
  - monet AND water AND lilies
  - "van gogh" OR gauguin
  - vermeer AND girl AND pearl
  - vermeer AND girl AND NOT pearl

Queries

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, re-query
- “Search within results” using "-".

Queries

- Once found, ask if site is best source
  - How authoritative is it?
  - Can you believe it?
  - How crucial is it that the information be true?
    - Cancer cure for Gramma
    - Hikes around Seattle

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
True Site, Bogus Implication

April Fool’s Prank Site

April Fool’s Prank Site

Project 1
Project 1

- Your page should look as legitimate as possible, but contain false information
- A site visitor should start out believing your site, but by the time they finish reading, they should realize that it’s a hoax
- Forget subtlety!

Project 1—People as topic

- Celebrities are okay
- Private people are not
  - David asked me for written permission before he started work
  - No, I’m not giving anyone else permission
    - Unless your idea is really, really good!

Project 1—Details on Web

- Topics can range from science fiction to the National Inquirer!
  - Another sphinx found amidst Lunar ruins of old civilization
  - New human gene discovered
  - Eiffel Tower moved to Seattle
  - Dolphin dictionary developed and tested: first press conference with the Dolphin Queen
  - 12-year-old quarterback leads Huskies to third national title!

Project 1—Details on Web

- Subtlety? No!
  - Content should move from serious to absurd, ridiculous, or hilarious
    - First glance: serious
    - Anyone who reads it thoroughly should realize that the site is a hoax
- Label the site as a hoax or bogus
  - Logo
  - Disclaimer
Project 1

- Include copyright information for all photos and other content
- See instructions for more details

Project 1A—Planning

- For this first part, you plan
  - What is the topic of your site?
  - What images are you going to use?
  - How will you manipulate them?
  - Show your rights to use the image
    - Copyright statement from source

Turn In Steps

- Publish your page by uploading to the Web server
- Submit your Word or .txt with project URL in Catalyst Collect It
- Do not touch anything in your 1A folder after the deadline
  - Until grading is complete
  - To work on Project 1B
    - Copy your Project1A files into a Project1B folder

We will check timestamps