Using a Blog to Engage Students in Literature Search Skills Sessions

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The key to making a successful blog is building a relationship with your readers.

I thought it was “make your updates good so people will want to read them.”

We’ll discuss content generation in part three.

Awesome! I love content.
Agenda

- The problem
- The solution
- Blogs as an educational tool
- My IL blog
- Assessment
The problem

- How to create a platform for the material I present in Information Literacy / Literature Research Skills sessions
  - Text & visual instructions
  - videos
  - links to online resources & tools
- How to make the material I talk about and demo easily findable to students after class
  - Including following up with me for questions
To massively oversimplify, librarians have two broad approaches to this problem:
  - Paper handouts
  - Static web pages (incl. PPT)
Finding a solution?

- Already using web pages maintained with Frontpage
- Looking for something a bit easier to maintain
- Scalable, shareable, open, social
- Cooler & sexier
- Heather Berringer presentation at OLA in 2007 gave me an idea...
Blogs as an educational tool

- Independent of institution-run software
- Interactivity can draw in shy students
- Extend discussion outside class time
- Promotes a learning community among students
- Disseminate course materials quickly and easily
- Students are comfortable with blogs & other web technology
- Students enjoy being part of "cutting edge"
  - From Kirk & Johnson
    - 1,2,3 Blog: The use of weblogs as an effective and efficient knowledge management tool in the classroom (http://delaney.typepad.com/files/kirk-johnson-swam-2010-proceedings-1-1.pdf)
Andrew Eckford on blogs

I would argue that the blog is as close as one can get in social media to the lecture: a blog post sets out a particular thesis, and permits an organized discussion on that thesis.

-Andrew Eckford

My IL blog

http://yorku.ca/yul/cse
ENG1000 Engineering Design Research Session

Posted in November 4th, 2009
by julipuis in Engineering, Research Sessions

FREE Citation Management Software

- RefWorks site (Login) can help you manage your footnotes & bibliography on the web. Easy to use, interfaces directly with MS Word to create footnotes & bibliographies.
- For off campus use, get the York group code here.
- FAQ and Instructions for various databases.
**General Information**

- **Scientific publication cycle**
- **Peer review**: researchers validating each other's work before publication
- **Kinds of documents**:
  - patents: government grants license to an invention
  - standards: agreed upon methodology; e.g. 802.11
  - journals: research results presented in a periodical/magazine. Peer reviewed.
  - conference proceedings: research results presented at a meeting. Often peer reviewed, but not always.
  - books
    - reference: encyclopedias, tables, data collections, properties
    - manuals: lab methods, programming languages, operating systems
    - monographs: general topics
  - technical specifications: how a device or component works, e.g. circuit diagrams
- **If you're not sure how to get started on your project, come to Steacie.**

My topic: cars that drive, navigate and park themselves!
• Google Books Search — can be helpful in finding books for more obscure topics or books that have significant sections that are useful.

• Some helpful books for this assignment:
  - Wiley Encyclopedia of EEE — TK 9 W55 1999 ref section

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**eBooks**

There are a couple of ebooks packages that are relevant to engineering:

• **Books 24 x 7 Engineering Pro** — massive engineering ebook database, something for every project.

• **Safari** — nearly 200 technology ebooks on software, operating systems, programming languages.

• **Synthesis** — more advanced ebooks on topics like biomedical engineering, antennas, image processing

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**Articles**

• Journal & conference articles give cutting edge, peer reviewed information on most topics.

• Some searches:
  - automated highways
  - intelligent vehicle
  - automatic car sensor
  - car navigation gps
Articles

- Journal & conference articles give cutting edge, peer reviewed information on most topics
- Some searches:
  - automated highways
  - intelligent vehicle
  - automatic car sensor
  - car navigation gps
  - car sensor navigation
  - car sensor collision
  - car sensor parking
  - automobile navigation automatic

- IEEE Xplore — general engineering full text database
- Scholars Portal — good general source for mostly full text articles. Choose Technology Option
- Expanded Academic — good general source, mostly full text
- ABI/Inform and Business Source Premier — business databases, mostly full text. Both have terrific coverage of scientific issues
- NASA Technical Reports Server — great resource on NASA missions, not everything is available in full text
- Science.gov — search portal for the US Government
- Engineering Village (with Inspect & Compendex): advanced article search engine
- Canadian Housestead & Law: Lexis Nexis Academic — full text of many Canadian &
Assessment

- **Statistics**
  - Sept 2009 to May 2010
  - 24K pageviews, 16K unique visits
  - Most popular page: 4200/2700
  - ENG 1000: 176/128

- **Advantages**

- **Challenges**
## Top Traffic Sources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>% visits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>google (organic)</td>
<td>8,221</td>
<td>61.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(direct) ((none))</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>21.04%</td>
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<tr>
<td>search (organic)</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library.yorku.ca (referral)</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>webct.yorku.ca (referral)</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>1.58%</td>
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<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
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<tr>
<td>nats 1840</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>18.98%</td>
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<td>nats 1760</td>
<td>569</td>
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<td>nats 1745</td>
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<tr>
<td>nats 1810</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eng 1000 post only
Nats 1840 post only
Advantages

- Good stats
- I become scalable
- Students find it easier to find me
- Students can use these pages for other courses
- Profs can link from Moodle, web pages, etc.
- Stats can help understand usage
- Meebo is a cool, dynamic classroom tool
- Blog page is easily Googled
- Pages are easy to create
- Content is reusable & remixable
Challenges

- Unanticipated uses
- Am I scalable right out of a job?
- Meebo can be distracting in class
- Blogs and other social networks/media are open -- comments, trolls, spam....
Contact

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http://twitter.com/dupuisj
http://www.facebook.com/john.dupuis

IL Blog: http://www.yorku.ca/yul/cse/

This presentation: http://tinyurl.com/dupuisceea10