

**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Learner: **Steven Diaz**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN

Please Follow These Procedures: If requested by your mentor, use an assignment cover sheet as the first page of the **word processor** file. Use "headers" to indicate your course code, assignment number, and your name on each page of the assignment/homework including this assignment cover sheet. .

Keep a Photocopy or Electronic Copy Of Your Assignments: You may need to re-submit assignments if your mentor has indicated that you may or must do so.

Academic Integrity: All work submitted in each course must be the Learner's own. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by the faculty mentor. The knowing submission of another persons work represented as that of the Learner's without properly citing the source of the work will be considered plagiarism and will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course, and may result in academic dismissal.

LTM5003

Dr. Amy Peterson

**Educational Applications of Educational
Media**

**Assignment 8: Report – Need for
Information Literacy**

Dr. Peterson,

I have surf the Internet to locate information for research and entertainment. However, I never visited websites with hatred and misleading propaganda that have the potential of changing the beliefs and core values of a person. This assignment was an eye-opening experience, which helped me realize that I need to monitor even more what my children are seeing in the Internet. They have the tendency to believe what they read or see in the Internet. As a parent, I am always concerned of the bad influences that my children could be exposed. However, these bad influences are not only at school or in the neighborhood but now these can easily reach the privacy and safe-environment of my home. What a scary thought!

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<Writing Score>

<Date Graded>

Report – Need for Information Literacy

Steven Diaz

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Need for Information Literacy

Today, teaching and learning social studies using the Internet have never been more relevant, current and enriching that only a time machine could be a better learning experience. We are blessed of having at our fingertips a wealth of information from the Internet that visiting a library seems a vintage experience. Most likely, the first place anyone will find additional information for a particular historical or current event will be the Internet. The ease of typing a few keywords in the mighty search box of our favorite search engine is more appealing than looking for books, magazines, or newspapers in the dusty shelves of a library. We often prefer the feeling of empowerment and independence of finding information than asking assistance from a teacher, a librarian, or expert in the field of social studies. It is during these instances when the major concerns arise of using the Internet as a primary source for information. Our often blind trust on technology and our lacking experience of questioning everything we read, see, or listen are the reasons we are most likely to be deceived or misled, which could lead us to compromising circumstances in our lives.

Hofstetter (2006) recognized the Internet “as the most strategic resource in modern society” (p. 358). The possibility of finding video, audio, pictures, animations, and text for every topic related with social studies or any subject seems endless, making school textbooks seem inadequate, non-engaging, and outdated resources. The Internet has made the world smaller and more complex and due to the easy access but constant and dramatic change of information, it has significantly impacted social studies since it has increased the amount of content to be learned (Roblyer, 2006). Distance and time are not anymore hindering our ability to know more about events that happened in other places or countries, which could affect us somehow. An event that occurred thousands of miles away is immediately communicated through the Internet, even

before local and national television or newspapers can do. Scott and Sullivan (2000) stated that the easy access to the wealth of information available in the Internet lure or infatuates our students to use it as an authoritative resource.

However, there is a paradoxical fact about the Internet, which consist that its vast amount of information is also its most significant disadvantage (Education Week, 2008). Anyone with good web authoring skills can create legitimate looking web sites, and for such reason, McCoach (2002) stated that “the Internet is the great equalizer of information distribution” (para. 4). The major source of information for many of our students is also “the ultimate conduits for freedom of speech and expression” (Street, 2005, para. 3) of many other individuals. Students can accidentally or not access web sites that contain misleading or hatred information that can change their views or beliefs about the realities we live and make ill decisions. They can also have access to inaccurate, unreliable, and not credible information that if they use for classroom purposes, it could cause them embarrassment in front of their peers and teachers, poor academic performance, and affect their self-esteem.

The proliferation of misinformation in the Internet is astonishing. The following examples are websites whose purpose is to disseminate hatred messages but disguised and masquerade their agenda with a well designed web site (Westcott, 2005). For example, a student doing an Internet research on the life of Martin Luther King will most likely find the website www.martinlutherking.org, which according to Education Week (2008), the purpose of the site is to discredit King’s work on civil rights and promote the removal of the holiday under his name. Another example is given by November (2007) in his article *Teaching Zack to think*, in which he tells the story of a student who was using Arthur R. Butz’s website (i.e. pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/di/intro.html) as a reference for his paper that the holocaust

never occurred. Even though Butz's original site is no longer available, copies of his website still exist throughout the net, and anyone can still gain access to his writings.

The following sites contain information (in some instances false ones) with the purpose of accomplishing political or personal agendas. Freedom's Phoenix site (i.e. www.freedomsphoenix.com) claims that Americans lost their freedom once the Constitution was adopted as the highest law and the framework for United States government. Free American (i.e. www.freeamerican.com) states they will provide visitors with the truth about history and current events based on biblical revelations, and that mainstream sources do not reveal. The website about Jacopo di Poggibonsi (i.e. www.umich.edu/~engtt516/), a medieval artist, contains historical accurate events of the 1400's but with the twist of a fictitious artist. This website was created by a group of college students who wanted to prove how easy anyone can create a website with forged information. The Faked Apollo Landings site (i.e. www.ufos-aliens.co.uk/cosmicapollo.html) claims that NASA astronauts in the Apollo missions never landed on the moon and the film footage was a complete hoax. Finally, the 9-11 Attacks on America site (i.e. www.apfn.org/apfn/WTC.htm), sponsored by the American Patriot Friends Network, claim to know the truth about the 9-11 attacks, which they believe it did not happened as the government and the media claim it happened.

Based on the above examples, it is clear and imperative that we must master, and then teach our students, information literacy skills if we want to harness the potential of the Internet (Scott & Sullivan, 2000). The likelihood of being misinformed or misled from information available in the Internet is too high to be ignored. Street (2005) stated "Students need guidance as they explore the unfamiliar terrain of the Internet" (para. 1) and the nature of social studies' content seems to be a perfect fit to provide such guidance. We need to change our students' mentality

that because the information came easily from the Internet, it does not imply the information is reliable, credible, and unbiased. Our goal should be to create a skeptical mentality in our students that lead them of not taking anything for granted not after thorough evaluation of their Internet sources. If we are already teaching them to read and think critically, then now we need to teach them to surf critically (McCoach, 2002).

The Internet is already a natural part of our lives and it has gradually become the infrastructure of the information society that we live in. Therefore, teaching our students to become informed consumers of information is empowering them to become productive members of our society, which is our primary purpose in social studies.

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