

Before you begin

This presentation will work best if participants have a computer or can view a projected computer screen. The exercise requires an internet connection.



Introduction

The Internet has a wealth of information on many topics, including safety and health. Unfortunately, there is also a lot of misinformation out there. It is important for users to evaluate resources or information. Remember that anyone can publish almost anything on the Web. It is often difficult for users to determine who wrote material found online. Even if the author is listed, they may not always represent themselves honestly, or they may present opinions as fact.

Discussion

When you are evaluating an online information source here are some quick things to think about:

- Who is the author? Are they an authoritative source? Is the site commercial, governmental, or an organization?
- Who created the site and who is the intended audience? Is it primarily advertising or selling a product?
- Is the content academic, news, self-published? Was it peer-reviewed? Does the source have a point of view or agenda?
- When was it written? Is there a date on the website that you can identify?
- Is there documentation of the sources used to create the material?

There are tricks to finding accurate and specific information online. Remember that search engines are best at pointing you to information that you know exists. Here are suggestions on how to improve Internet searches.

Search terms: The words you type into a search box can help make your results better. If you are not finding what you're looking for, try thinking about other terms you can use. Instead of "forklift," for example, try "powered industrial truck," or "lift truck."

Advanced search: Most search engines have an advanced search option. If you use a particular search engine regularly, learn how to use its advanced search. It will help you narrow your searches by giving you the ability to use phrases and limit by format and domain.

A search for the phrase "power press" will be more precise than a search for "power" and "press" as separate words. With advanced search, you can specify you want a PowerPoint presentation on your topic or only search for documents in PDF format. If you want to avoid commercial sites, you can limit your search to only government (.gov) and/or university (.edu) sites.

Conclusion

If you're having trouble finding what you're looking for, you can call BWC's librarians for assistance. They can help you refine your search, suggest appropriate sites, or email you links to webpages that will answer your questions. You can reach the BWC librarians by calling 1-800-644-6292 and following the prompts or by emailing library@bwc.state.oh.us.

Group activity

Web-search practice

Open your favorite web browser and go to any search engine (e.g., Google's search engine https://www.google.com/advanced_search). Learn how to find the advanced search function. Create searches using the general search box, then create a special search. How do the results change? Try to find documents in different formats (.doc, .ppt, .pdf) and from different domains (.gov, .edu, .org).

References/resources

The following websites offer a wide variety of workplace safety and health information.

www.osha.gov

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) website is an excellent place to check first, especially if OSHA has a standard or rule on a topic. If you want more information on hazard communication or bloodborne pathogens or lockout/tagout, OSHA is an authoritative source. The best way to navigate the site is to use the A to Z index at the top of the home page. Select the first letter of the topic, for example H for hazard communication, and you will gain access to information on your selected topic.

www.niosh.gov

Like OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is a federal government agency. However, instead of issuing standards, NIOSH conducts research. You can navigate the site by using the A to Z index on the home page. NIOSH is especially strong on information about workplace health issues.

www.cpwr.org

CPWR is the Center for Construction Research and Training. NIOSH funds this organization that specializes in research and training materials for the construction industry. Of note are the frequent webinars and extensive publications. The site also has extensive data on the construction industry as a whole. The best way to access resources on this website is through the menus on the left side of the home page.