THE PROBLEM: TOO MUCH INFORMATION

Students of all ages have so much access to information from the internet and social media! Unfortunately, not all of this information is accurate. Since bad information and "fake news" stories are everywhere, the ability to think critically about information is more important than ever!

Over 90% of students say they need to conduct academic research on the Web (Burton & Chadwick, 2000).

62% of adults get new from social media (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016).

Over 50% of students prefer Web searches over library databases for assignments (Head & Eisenberg, 2010).

23% of adults have shared a "fake news" article (Barthel, 2016)!

Unfortunately, it is impossible to know exactly how much Web information is true/false!

THE SOLUTION: INFORMATION LITERACY

Information Literacy is the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information," ("Information literacy", 2001)
To ensure your students can navigate so much information, incorporate these skills into your classroom assignments:

Skills & Classroom Actvities

SKILL #1: WHEN/WHAT/HOW MUCH INFO IS NEEDED

- Assign a research question that requires them to figure out what types of info are needed and how much
- As your students to identify different sources and types of information: articles, books, websites, data, definitions, stats, etc.
- Whenever possible, ask, "How do you know this is true?"

SKILL #2: HOW TO FIND INFORMATION EFFICIENTLY

- Ask your students to locate information in different formats: library databases, books & eBooks, reference materials, and websites.
- Teach your students how to search databases with keywords/subject headings/Boolean operators and narrow down their results.
- Require your students to provide step-by-step narratives of their research for assignments.

SKILL #3: HOW TO EVALUATE INFORMATION

- Provide your students with a checklist of criteria for good sources on the Web to use for research assignments.
- Assign your students a collection of sources and have them identify the most/least credible.
- Ask your students to evaluate a Wikipedia page for accuracy.

SKILL #4: HOW TO USE INFORMATION APPROPRIATELY

- Teach your students how to cite sources (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) and why it is important.
- Require all assignments to have appropriate citation/documentation.
- Show your students examples of how information can be misused: misquotations, selective use of information, misrepresentation, etc.