



# Electronic Materials

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## An Information Literate Student

- 1 Accesses information efficiently & effectively.
- 2 Evaluates information critically & competently.
- 3 Uses information accurately & creatively.
- 4 Pursues information related to personal interests.
- 5 Appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.
- 6 Strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.
- 7 Recognizes the importance of information in a democratic society.
- 8 Practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.
- 9 Participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

## Connecting Children & Teens to Information

On April 20, 2010, I had the pleasure of attending Carmel High School's 50th Annual Scholastic Awards Banquet to honor top scholars. My oldest son, Shea Jendrusina, was included among the sophomores receiving the award. Top scholars are students who represent the top 3% of their class based on grade point average. Since these kids take college level courses beginning with their freshman year in high school, they all have grade point averages well over 4.0.

As I listened to the seniors deliver speeches about upcoming college plans, a common thread began to emerge. These young people are digital learners. They have had wide access to technology and plenty of guidance along

the way on how to get the most out of it. Each senior thanked their mentors: teachers, counselors, librarians and especially parents — parents who believed in them and guided them to the tools they needed to become

successful. As one senior was thanking her mother, she said how much she'd miss her at college. But, she also said not to worry because next year — they'd Skype.

These are parents who know what Skype is. They understand their children's need for technology in a digital world. They encourage it. They also allow their children to teach them a thing or two. Today, when my computer kept redirecting me to an unwanted website, it was my 15-year-old son who fixed it for me.

You want to apply for college? Internet. Need a job? Internet. Pay your taxes? Internet. Kids better learn how to use it or they will be unprepared for the world of adults.



Image from Free Clip Art by Phillip Martin

## Access, Guidance and Inquiry

Navigating the world wide web takes practice. It also requires guidance. In "Chat Room: What America Needs to Know," Walter Minkel alerts us to a common misconception that "Information = The Internet." There is plenty of information on the Internet — but much of it is inaccurate, unreliable and misleading. Minkel insists that "America needs information literacy training." The Indiana

Department of Education certainly agrees. As pictured on the left, there are currently nine [state standards](#) of information literacy for Indiana students.

Carol Collier Kuhlthau challenges educators to do even more. "Information literacy is important but there is more to education for the 21st century. The latest AASL (2007) standards expand information

literacy to incorporate inquiry" (Kuhlthau). In simple terms, she defines inquiry as "a research approach to learning."

Research tools have changed. With so much information available instantly, and so little of it worthwhile, students need guidance. And, librarians provide it — with pathfinders, tutorials and webquests — the electronic toolkit of guided inquiry.

# Pathfinders



<http://sites.google.com/site/leviathanpathfinder/>

Kelly Kuntz defines a pathfinder as “a plan of action, a place to start ... a trailhead for finding information.”

The *Leviathan Pathfinder* provides a list of links guiding young adults to outstanding resources related to Scott Westerfeld’s novel, *Leviathan*. With the help of a computer and an Internet connection, readers can explore faraway places, travel through time and learn how to do new things by exploring hand-selected websites, software and databases. This pathfinder also recommends award-winning printed resources.

*Leviathan* is an alternate history of 1914. Students interested in re-

searching the real beginnings of WWI will find links from this pathfinder directly to historical data.

In the novel, there is a cat-like marsupial called a thylacine. Also known as Tasmanian Tigers, thylacines have been extinct since the mid-1930’s. But old film footage is available online of real thylacines from 1933, if you know where to find it. Students who use the *Leviathan Pathfinder* are one click away from seeing an extinct animal walking, yawning and sniffing while it lived in 1933.



<http://sites.google.com/site/americanthebeautifultutorial/>

## Tutorials

Sometimes students and even adults avoid databases because they think it’s easier to look for information with a search engine like Google. Easier, maybe — but better? No way. Databases have things a lot of websites don’t. Things like accuracy, authority, currency and relevancy. While databases may take a little longer to learn how to use than a Google search box, it’s

well worth the effort. Let’s say you’re studying the Civil War and you try to Google “Antietam.” You’ll get over one-million hits — most of them useless. But if you do the same search on a database like Grolier’s America the Beautiful (ATB), you’ll get 6 relevant, accurate articles, along with a list of links to 4 topic-specific websites that have been pre-evaluated by

Scholastic. Talk about a time-saver! Learning how to use ATB is easy with the help of the *America the Beautiful Tutorial*. This electronic resource takes you on a tour of the database, then provides easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions on common tasks like researching famous people, making maps and studying state capitals.

## WebQuests

WebQuests are the crown jewels of guided inquiry. While pathfinders provide lists of resources, and tutorials offer training on how to use those resources, webquests put it all together, engaging students in an inquiry while encouraging them to use the information they find to create something brand new.

The *Brooklyn Nine WebQuest* gives 5th grade students an oppor-

tunity to learn about the history behind historical fiction. While reading *The Brooklyn Nine: A Novel in Nine Innings* by Alan Gratz, students imagine collecting baseball souvenirs through 157 years of American history. Then, they use the webquest to research those souvenirs and create something of their own — a deck of nine trading cards, one for each inning of the book. At the

end of the webquest, 5th graders share their trading cards, and the stories behind them, with their first grade book buddies.

The process guides them to primary sources like American Memory’s *Baseball Cards 1887-1914*. It also teaches them research skills like planning, note-taking and citing sources, while giving them an opportunity for creativity and sharing.



<http://sites.google.com/site/thebrooklynninewebquest/>

## Conclusion

Guided inquiry leads students on meaningful research projects culminating in new, creative works that can be shared with others. Today's toolkit of inquiry is largely electronic, comprised of resources with features impossible to replicate through print alone: sound, video, interactivity and collaboration. Electronic materials in the toolkit may include a vast range of resources: software like [TuxPaint](#), [Comic Life](#) and [Inspiration](#); social bookmarking tools like [Delicious](#) and [Diigo](#); communication tools like [Jing](#) and [Skype](#); databases like LitFinder, Middle Search Plus and the Biography Resource Center through [INSPIRE](#); and, most definitely, websites.

Finding these resources takes time, training and experience. Fortunately, librarians can help. Want a list of worthwhile websites for kids? The Association for Library Service to Children has one at [Great Web Sites](#)

[for Kids](#) through the American Library Association. You can find more links to worthwhile children's websites through [IPL2](#), along with quality links for teens and adults.

But, the best place to start searching for information is on the websites of your local public library and school



**Carmel Clay Public Library**

[www.carmel.lib.in.us](http://www.carmel.lib.in.us)

55 4th Ave SE  
Carmel, IN 46032  
317-814-3900

media centers. The Carmel Clay Public Library creates lists of links chosen specifically for the Carmel Clay community, with local needs in mind.

There are Internet resource lists for [children](#), [teens](#) and [adults](#). And, don't forget databases. The Carmel Clay Public Library subscribes to dozens of [databases](#) you can access for free with your library card.

Students struggling with homework, teens applying for college, and adults searching for work can use CCPL's subscription to Tutor.com for free. Find out more at [www.tutor.com](http://www.tutor.com), then go to [www.carmel.lib.in.us](http://www.carmel.lib.in.us) and choose Live Tutor from the list of e-services on the left.

And, as far as learning how to Skype like that CHS senior and her mom? Drop in at the Carmel Clay Public Library on Tech Tuesdays at 2:30 pm. Librarians will help you get started.

## Works Cited

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