

4.3 Evaluating Credible Sources

Zig and Zag sit side by side at two computers. Both are focused intently on the screens in front of them.

Zig: *(suddenly pleased)* Aha. That source looks promising.

Zag: *(also pleased)* Whoa – awesomeness!

Zig: What? ‘Find a good source for your project?’

Zag: Huh? No, dude, a smokin’ deal on a snowboard!

Zig: *(looks at Zag’s screen)* Okay, you’re shopping?

Zag: Just a little harmless Ebay action, my friend.

Zig: Mr. Spooner says we only have ‘til the end of class to find three sources for the project, and –

Zag: Chillax, stress monkey. I’m on it.

Zig: *(skeptical)* No doubt.

Zag: No prob. I can do this; that’s the beauty of the internet.

Zig: beg to differ.

Zag: Stop beggin’. *(typing quickly)* I’ll just do a quick search...

Zig: There’s more to it than –

Zag: ...and kazinga! Source-o-rama!

Zig: Uh, dude?

Zag: Thousands of hits!

Zig: Duh – but what kind of hits?

Zag: Why, internet hits, of course.

Zig: *(shaking his head)* And what did Mr. Spooner say about the internet?

Zag: *(squinting, searching his memory)* Uh, don’t tell me – I got this –

Zig: *(rolling eyes)* I don’t have time for this.



Zag: No, really, dude – um...

Zig: He said that the web can give us (*consulting notes; quoting*) “excellent, reliable information OR useless and inaccurate garbage.”

Zag: Oh, yeah, that’s it.

Zig: So, if that’s the case, why is a quick web search with a couple minutes left in the class not a good idea?

Zag: Uh, ‘cause the web has – um – more garbage than good stuff?

Zig: Correct! Give that man a cookie!

Zag: So wait – what does the Spooner-man want then?

Zig: (*sigh*) He said we need reliable academic sources.

Zag: Yeah, so?

Zig: Yeah, so look at the first one on your list. (*points at Zag’s screen*)

Zag: (*looks*) Huh.

Zig: Your topic is the legalizing “mary jo wanna” debate?

Zag: Uh huh.

Zig: (*points at Zag’s screen*) What’s that say?

Zag: (*reading screen*) “Kam’s Kush for Kash.”

Zig: (*sarcastic*) A truly reliable and academic source! Top notch, dude!

Zag: ‘Kay, I get it.

Zig: Picture some guy sitting at his computer in his parents’ basement...

Zag: I don’t wanna.

Zig: ...36 years old and the guy who retrieves grocery carts at the local grocery store, blogging away in his t-shirt, with one of the sayings like “power to the people!”

Zag: Ok. I am getting the picture!

Zig: ...and he’s smoking doobies, with munchies cascading off the desk, with some grow lights and potted plants.

Zag: Ok. I understand your point!

Zig: ...and that's what you get when you just trust the magic of the internet. Anyone can put their stuff out there. You don't want that reflecting on your project.

Zag: *(suddenly confused)* Well, what do I do, then?

Zig: Spooner says the easiest thing is to use academic databases.

Zag: Huh?

Zig: They only include the good stuff.

Zig: No *Kam's Kush for Kash*?

Zig: Definitely.

Zag: 'Got it. What else?

Zig: If we do actually do a web search, we're supposed to evaluate.

Zag: What?

Zig: Look at the quality and the editing. Does it look professional? Who did it? Are there mistakes in it? Stuff like that.

Zag: Like, make a decision about it?

Zig: Yeah. Use judgment. Don't let the web think for you.

Zag: Dude, that's righteous. You should write that down.

Zig: 'Can't.

Zag: Why not? It's deep.

Zig: It's from my notes. Spooner said it.

Zag: Whoa. The Spoon-man comes up with a good one.

Zig: He has his moments, y'know?

Zag: Now if we could convince him to stop wearing the crazy fish tie...

Zig: I know, right?

Zag: Yeah.

Zig: Not now, though. 'Clock's tickin'.

Zag: Oh. Yeah. Credible sources first.

Zig: Then snowboards.

They hunker down at their computers to find credible sources.

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