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Honors Research Assignment

6/4/19

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Introduction

The assignments that I completed for my WR 227 course include a Technical Definition of PowerPoint presentation software and an Analytical Report, researching and comparing PowerPoint and Prezi in the respect of the usefulness for college students. I researched PowerPoint and its effectiveness in education, privacy, and ease-of-use, focusing on college aged individuals and the history of the software. The inquiry question that led me to complete this research was “which presentation software, between PowerPoint and Prezi, is the best educational choice for a college student?” This question was one that directed my research to specifically PowerPoint, and it’s benefits over Prezi. The assignment guidelines led me to pick and choose resources that were of different types and useful to the information that I needed to gather.

My inquiry question framed a specific type of evidence that I knew my group should pursue, that of a survey and an interview. Our group decided that these types of research methods would benefit our report since they would offer insight into Lane Community College through both the students and the faculty. Because of this, my group gave a survey to the other students in WR 227 and one person held an email interview with a faculty member who would enlighten us on the privacy policy PowerPoint use on LCC’s server.

Source Selection

The specific criteria that I chose when searching for sources to utilize were that I needed one website, scientific article or study, interview, survey, and how-to, they needed to be related to the presentation software, PowerPoint, and they needed to be accurate and helpful to both my assignments at hand. Specifically for the Technical Definition I needed to find five sources with

at least three different types of sources. Using those for the Analytical report was acceptable and I needed to find additional studies for the criteria of that assignment. These were my criteria because of the fact that I needed to find sources that were relevant and beneficial to the argument or information that I was writing about.

One specific source that I found interesting, but did not choose to include in my references or citations, was an article titled, “The Best Presentation Software,” by Jill Duffy. I chose not to include this source because I felt there was not enough useful information present included in the article. It only provided a simple, to the point, pro and con list with barely enough information to add a couple facts or quotations. This did not meet my criteria of being helpful or accurately based on real data.

A source entitled, “Prezi vs. PowerPoint: Which One Is Better?” by PresentationGeeks is one I chose to include, because I felt it was accurate and gave detailed reasons for why certain aspects of both Prezi and PowerPoint were either a pro or a con. This article was a website, so it provided me with another source type other than a scientific journal, interview, or survey, and it was accurately depicted the two presentation software at hand.

There were many challenges I faced when selecting my sources for the assignments in WR 227. One of the most difficult of these included the selection of a scientific journal that would be beneficial to my thesis. I wanted to find a study that was done specifically on the effect of using PowerPoint and Prezi in education and reliably depicted which software provided the most educational benefits. In the end I found a study that was done in a school in Taiwan that studied the effects of teaching with both types of presentation software. I overcame the obstacle that this source selection caused by further specifying the keywords that I utilized in the search engine of my choice, google scholar.

Source Overview

One of the major takeaways that this research project provided me with was that first, PowerPoint in some studies, has been shown in a classroom setting to be less distracting than Prezi, and was shown to be a more effective medium for acquiring information to be stored in

long-term memory. I found out this while reading the article titled, “Prezi vs PowerPoint: The Effects of Varied Digital Presentation Tools on Students’ Learning Performance,” by P. Chou, et. al. While Prezis more attractive graphics and interesting themes may be more effective at gaining the attention of a younger audience, or one that needs more stimulation, it can be distracting. PowerPoint, on the other hand, is simply supplementary material that is usually beneficial to one’s presentation.

Another important thing that I learned from my research is one that I had already inferred, but did not know the public’s general conclusion. This is that PowerPoint is much more user-friendly to a lay person or someone with not much experience with computers. This information was gathered from the source, “Prezi vs PowerPoint: Which One Is Better?,” by PresentationGeeks. Next, PowerPoint, because it is a Microsoft product, in general, is a lot easier to use if someone is familiar with Microsoft software including Microsoft Word and provides other benefits like being able to print out slides with room for notes.

The last important thing that I will take away from this research on PowerPoint and Prezi is what I learned about the history of both PowerPoint and Prezi. Software like these have not been around for very long, yet we use them so much in our everyday lives through work and education. I read about the history of PowerPoint in the article titled “The History of PowerPoint | From 1987 to present day,” by Buffalo7. I feel appreciative that we have the resources like these that we can be taught, and ourselves teach information in schools, business, nonprofits, speeches, debates, and even more.

I feel that the article which most benefited my research was one titled “Prezi vs PowerPoint: The Effects of Varied Digital Presentation Tools on Students’ Learning Performance,” by P. Chou et.al. This is because it clearly answered my research question on what benefits PowerPoint offered students’ education and where lies its’ drawbacks. I think the source I found most exciting was one called, “PowerPoint Presentation Technology and the Dynamics of Teaching,” by R. J Craig and J.H. Amernic. It was interesting for me to read because it further questioned PowerPoint’s role in education and how things have changed since the era of hard copies, and transparencies.

Key Takeaways

One of the main takeaways from this specific research that I performed is that I need to work on being more thorough in my source selection. I tend to choose sources before I have spent enough time finding the most beneficial ones. Some of the key things I will work on revising for my next inquiry process is diving deep into search engines and finding more specific words and phrases to search for sources. I will make these two changes because I believe it will help me develop into a better researcher and draw conclusions that are more accurate. One thing I believe that was very successful in my inquiry process is that one of my criteria was to have diverse types of sources. I feel that my sources worked well because they provided multiple opinions and opportunities for data collection.

Based on my personal experience as a researcher, I would suggest to other researchers engaging in this inquiry process to follow three rules, accuracy matters, diversify your sources, and find sources that are relevant to the research at hand. It is important to find data that is not only related to the thing you are researching but also accurate. This will help your thesis be reinstated if your audience trusts that you are providing reliable information. Additionally, when you diversify the types of sources that you use and cite in your research, it will help you grasp a better and more full understanding of your topic.