

WHY THE INTERNET IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A LIBRARY

NOT EVERYTHING IS ON THE INTERNET

There are over one billion web pages on the Internet. You would think that everything in the world would be there, but it's NOT! Literally there is a lot of fat, but not much meat. Very little of what is on the Web is of research quality. For example, only about 8% of all journals, and even fewer books are on the Web.

THE NEEDLE (YOUR SEARCH) IN THE HAYSTACK (THE WEB)

The Internet is like a vast uncataloged library. Whether you're using *Yahoo*, *Google*, *Dogpile* or any one of a dozen other search engines, you're not searching the entire Web. Sites often promise to search everything, but they can't deliver. Moreover, what they do find is not up-to-date, and information that you find today may not be there tomorrow.

QUALITY CONTROL DOESN'T EXIST

Yes, we need the Internet, but in addition to all the scientific, medical, and historical information, there is also a lot of garbage. There is no quality control on the Web, and there isn't likely to be any. Vanity is largely what drives the Internet. Any fool can put up anything on the Web, and many have. Much of the information is inaccurate, biased, opinion and sometimes just untrue.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW REALLY DOES HURT YOU

The great boon to libraries has been the digitization of journals. But full-text sites, while grand, aren't always complete. What you don't have can hurt your research. Articles on these sites are often missing such things as bibliographies, photographs, tables, charts, and graphs.

THE INTERNET: A MILE WIDE AND AN INCH (OR LESS) DEEP

The majority of information on the Net is less than 15 years old. Access to older material is slowly being provided, but it's very expensive and time consuming to do. It is important for students to have access to more than just the materials written in the last 10 to 15 years, so to add depth to your research there is no substitute for a full-service library.

Adapted from Herring, Mark Y. "10 Reasons Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library." *American Libraries* 32.4 (2001): 76-78.

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