Google joins the veterinary curriculum

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Introduction

- Instead of wringing our hands ... we should help them learn to use Web materials and resources more effectively

2003 OCLC report
Faculty of Veterinary Science
University of Pretoria

- Up-to-date facilities
- State-of-the-art computer laboratory – 130 workstations
- Free Internet for students all day
Google is King!

- Students do not need a librarian – or so they think!
Disintermediation

- Librarians/information specialists need to try new instructional approaches

(Agee and Antrim 2003)
Designing the course

- University at Albany, USA
- University of California Berkeley
- New Zealand course
- Plus others
Focus of the course

- Searching free relevant animal health sites
- To equip them with effective searching techniques
- To keep-up-to-date in their field as practitioners in the future
Teaching aids

- Powerpoint presentation
- Handouts
- Exercises
Content 1

- Search tools
  - subject gateways
  - web directories
  - search engines

- Search tips
Content 2

- Optimising relevance

  - Course content is linked to study areas covered in final year
    - Veterinary Public Health
    - Companion Animal Medicine
    - Production Animal Studies
Animal health related sites – a selection of the best
- VetGate,
- IVIS,
- OIE,
- FAO,
- WHO
Content 4

- Free databases
  - Pubmed
  - Agricola

- Consultant
  - (diagnostic info)
Content 5

- How to cite Web resources
- Evaluation of Web resources
Exercises

- Example

**A WEB SEARCHING ACTIVITY**

Practice your search strategies and share your insight with others by completing this activity.

Pick one of these topics to search:
- A general site about conservation in Africa
- A page with information about Sir Arnold Theiler
- A site containing facts on endangered species from around the world
- Information on Genetically Modified (GM) Foods
- A page with links on caring for pets

Pick one or more search tools to use for your search, e.g.
- Yahoo
- Alta Vista
- Google
- Infoseek
- Excite

After doing the search, complete the following questions:

**Topic of search**
What search tools did you use?
How long did it take to find what you were looking for?
What search words did you use to start with?
Did you have to revise your search words? Why?
What were the most successful search words?
What's the address of the page you found?
Describe the steps you took to find this page
How satisfied were you with the page you found? How well did it fit what you were looking for?
How well do you think your chosen search tool is for your search? Why?
What was the most frustrating thing you encountered in your searching?
Any other remarks?
How it is presented

- Groups of 9
- Hands-on, in the Computer Lab
- 2 hours duration
- Exercise is done individually
- Feedback is given through the exercise
- Certificate awarded
Support of Faculty

- Clinical rotation in BVSc VI year
- Attendance is compulsory
- Report given to Director, Clinical Services
Full Course content

- Introduction
- Search tips
- Search tools
  - Subject gateways
  - Web directories
  - Search engines
- Subject tools for Animal Health e.g.
  - Animal health gateway: VetGate
  - BIOME
  - Consultant (Cornell University)
- Free Databases:
  - Agricola
  - Pubmed
- E-Books e.g.
  - Merck Veterinary Manual
Full Course content (cont)

- Electronic Zoo
- Slide collections —
  - e.g. Bristol Biomed Image Archive
- Tutorials for practitioners
- Vetscite
- WHO
- Zoonosis websites

- Evaluating web resources
- How to cite resources
Conclusions

- Positive feedback
- Needed earlier in curriculum
- Google was the search engine most had used
- But knowledge of Google superficial
- Most animal health sites unknown to students
Conclusions (cont)

- Hands-on, face-to-face most effective
- Opportunity to re-enforce earlier training
Future plans

- Place course on the web (as backup)
- Lecturer assign task in Vet Public Health to strengthen the learning
- Present course at veterinary conferences, etc
- To support practitioners CPD
Should we be concerned?
Will we be replaced?

- No!
- Google can only reach full potential when Information Specialists show the way
Thank You !!