

## **EPD 151 Discussion Forum Topics, Spring 2010**

### **Welcome & Introductions: Discussion Practice**

**Part 1.** Introduce yourself to the discussion forum. Tell the class what your hometown is famous for.

**Part 2.** Post a quick reply to one classmate's post that interests you.

### **Unit 1: Information Needs and Uses of Engineers**

**Part 1.** Consider the article from New Scientist. Do you agree with the author's assessment of why the bridge's engineers did not catch the design flaw earlier? *Alternately:* Imagine you are a design engineer working on the Millennium Bridge project. A literature review uncovers the Fujino article early in the design process. Would this one article influence the design process? Why or Why Not?

**Part 2** Respond to a classmate's posting explaining why you agree or respectfully disagree with your classmate.

**Part 3** Hopefully you've been thinking about the research topic that you will be using for the next 6 weeks. Now is the time to tell us what your topic is so that you can use it throughout the course, starting with finding a website in Unit 2. Please **REPLY** to this message by clicking on the "compose" button. Write your topic as a sentence or as a question. example: Is switchgrass a cost effective source of ethanol?

### **Unit 2: Internet Basics and Critical Thinking**

**Part 1** Choose one of the following two topics and recommend a good website (not just a webpage) on that topic: Application of nanomaterials in medical science (or) Economic impact of ecotourism. Be sure to explain how you located this website and why you are recommending it, based on the criteria for evaluating websites.

**Part 2** Look at one of your classmate's recommended websites and comment on why you agree or disagree that this is a good website.

### **Unit 3: Basic Search Techniques and Strategies**

*Unit 3 discussion will help you complete your Round of Searching project. It consists of a mini-assignment. It will be much easier to do this if you have read/listened to the Unit 3 content and tutorials. Complete each of the following, posting your answers below each question.*

**Part 1** Write your topic as a question or statement (eg., "Is the US power grid vulnerable to cyber warfare?").

**Part 2** Open a new window or tab. Following your own lead about where to search, find background information on your topic. There is no right or wrong place to look for this information. Researcher intuition is worth a lot. While you're at it write down any terms that are potentially useful, such as narrower/broader terms, synonyms, acronyms, or related terms (eg. attack for warfare, CAD for computer aided design, etc.)

**Part 3** What was/were your best background information source/s? In choosing your top few, remember to apply the criteria for evaluating sources from Unit 2. Provide the citation information or URL.

**Part 4** Most indexing databases use Boolean syntax to structure searches. Put your concepts and

terms in Boolean search syntax, using AND, OR and parentheses correctly. Be sure to include any helpful truncation. Example: (US or united states) and (power grid\* or electrical power system\* or power supply) and (secur\* or attack\*)

#### **Unit 4: Journal Articles and Conference Papers**

**Part 1** Having completed Unit 4, find a scholarly journal article or a conference paper on your topic in one of the databases available in the E-Resources Gateway in the appropriate subject area. To access the E-Resources Gateway, go to [www.library.wisc.edu](http://www.library.wisc.edu). You will need to select an appropriate database for the topic. Your reply should include:

- A)** Name of the subject area and database you searched, and why you selected it.
- B)** Boolean search strategy you used: for example, (cat or cats or feline\*) and (food or nutrition).
- C)** Complete citation for the article or conference paper, including all pertinent information, such as TITLE, AUTHOR/S, SOURCE or JOURNAL NAME, VOLUME and ISSUE NUMBER, DATE of publication, CONFERENCE INFORMATION if applicable, and ABSTRACT (copy and paste is easiest).
- D)** Your comments on the searching process, including any difficulty you encountered and any adjustments you made to your original search query.

**Part 2** Reply to a classmate's posting, offering a gentle but useful comment for improving their search.

#### **Unit 5: Books**

*In the Unit 5 lesson, you searched the EngNetBase/CRCNetBase to find titles related to your research topic for EPD 151. If you found a relevant book title or book chapter, it may be something you can use for your Annotated Bibliography assignment, which is due on April 11.*

If you found a good title, paste the citation here with a brief explanation of how it helps you with your research. This will be good practice for writing your annotations later on!

If you tried searching EngNetBase/CRCNetBase in Unit 5, and did **not** find anything useful, please give your best explanation as to why you think that was the case.

#### **Unit 6: How To Find Patents**

Find a U.S. utility patent for a product for house pets, such as cats and dogs. Pick one you like and report on it: the number, the title, the inventor, any company (assignee), drawings and the first claim. What key terms did you use? Patents can contain inconsistent terminology for the same idea - did you find some unexpected terms in your search results? Give an example.

(OR)

You are interviewing for a job with a pet food manufacturer. You want to see what new things they are developing. Search for patents held by Ralston Purina or IAMS. (Hint: Use the Assignee field) How many patents did you find? What areas are they experimenting with?

### **Unit 7: About Government Information and Technical Reports**

Go to a technical reports database or other government documents source, and find a report that you can use in your Annotated Bibliography.

Post the report title with report number (eg. DOE 2001-35-11) here, and tell us where you found it. Write an annotation that you will use for this item in your Annotated Bibliography.

### **Unit 8: About Standards**

Have you ever encountered a situation in your life where safety was compromised by a lack of standardization or a simple failure to meet standards?

Alternately, tell us about the standard you've found on your topic and how you found it.

### **Unit 9: Business and Entrepreneurial Information for Engineers**

Using *ThomasNet*, *Hoover's*, *OneSource*, or *ABI/Inform*, search for product or company information, or industry news on a topic that interests you. Then tell us about it, please. Be sure to tell us which of these four tools you used.