

Media Literacy and Online Safety in RBSD

Submitted by LMS Sue Fellerer, Cindy Bailey and Pam Mumm

“Anybody, anywhere, can put anything they want online.” This is a statement that the students in the Rosendale-Brandon School District have heard more than once by their library media specialist when they are conducting research online. Why? Because it is true. According to “Revealed, What Happens in just One Minute on the Internet,” 571 new websites are being added every minute! (Woollaston, 2013) There is no way they are all being checked for accuracy. There is no way to really “know” who is actually authoring the website. There is no way to know for sure if the information is trustworthy. But, there are steps a young researcher can take to make sure they are finding good reliable resources.

Students in the Rosendale Brandon School District are using technology and are online as early as kindergarten in their classrooms and during structured library classes. Students have access to educational programs on iPads, Chrome and Windows devices. While using these devices, they learn how to login to a network, how to launch a web browser, how to navigate to a favorite website, how to use a mouse and keyboard and even how to troubleshoot problems with their technology. They are taught how to be safe on the Internet using lessons from NetSmartzKids, CommonSenseMedia, and PBS News Hour.

Once online, they have a plethora of resources available to them (see infographic). In the early grades, they are not given free rein online. The library media specialist or their classroom teacher provide pre-selected websites to teach academic and technology skills. At the upper elementary level and middle school level, they are given more independence to find their own resources and information. The question for the older students (and even adults) is then raised, “How do I know what I am reading is true or even real?”

As an adult, we use our background knowledge to filter out what we know to be bogus right away, but our children have difficulty doing this because they have not yet developed that knowledge base or are unable to make those connections. They also have the misconception that information from online and social media is true and accurate. With all of the bogus information floating around online, easily accessible by our students, what is being done to help them find good reliable, accurate, updated resources?

First, in our district, many classroom teachers have a classroom website that their students can access with many links to resources used in class. These websites provide a “walled garden” (a safe place) for students to start early research and web navigation skills.

Second, students in K-3rd grade have structured library classes once a week with a certified library media specialist (LMS). These classes blend library and information skills with technology skills. They are often held in a computer lab and reinforce the skills they are learning in the classroom. As with a classroom website, the LMS will direct students to specific websites through Destiny to gather information or will start to show them search strategies using Google.

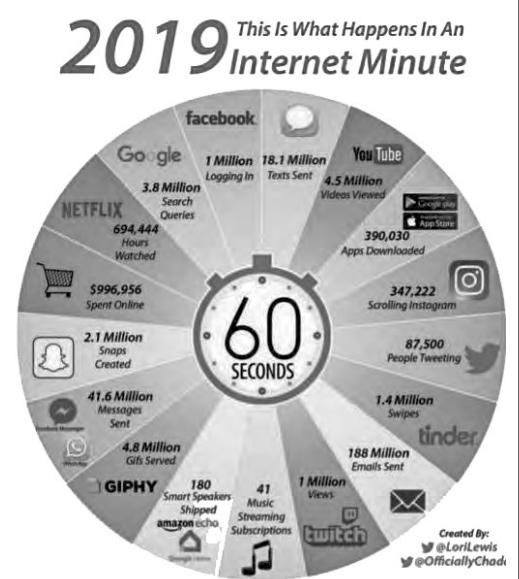
Third, students dig deeper into websites in their Language Arts classes as well as their technology classes, looking at the publication date to make sure the website is being maintained and is current. We talk about finding authors or publishers of the website to make sure the website is authored by a professional in the content. We teach them about

online databases, such as Badgerlink, that are available to them as a student in the state of Wisconsin. We review websites and determine their reliability using strategies such as D.O.N.U.T.S. (Date, Organization, Not a blog, Up-to-date, Title, and Sensical).

For example, Brandon 6th grade students look over the “Save the Pacific Tree Octopus” website (<http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>). At first, the students are really into it and think it is pretty cool. The site looks legitimate (spoiler alert for the upcoming 6th graders), but as they dig deeper, they slowly start to realize something is not right and finally students start to question what they are seeing until they begin to realize the site is not what it seems. Another similar lesson, challenges students on whether or not they should ban dihydrogen monoxide (aka--water) by sharing an article that focuses on the negative effects of H₂O (<http://www.dhmo.org/facts.html>). There is no deception here, all the facts are true, like dihydrogen monoxide is the leading component in acid rain or it can cause severe burns. We teach them, however, to recognize bias within writing and that oftentimes websites leave out critical information that is needed to make an informed choice!

Finally, students and staff are taught how to keep their personal information safe online. The library media specialists, with help from the technology department, provide tips on how to keep personal information from being compromised and promote internet safety by following the guidelines established by the *Children’s Internet Protection Act*. One important way to keep your information safe online is through secure passwords. This year, every person in the district was prompted to change their passwords using recommendations from the *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)*. Believe it or not, P@55W0rd! is not a very secure password. The NIST recommends using “passphrases” instead of a “password”. Research is showing that longer passwords are more secure than passwords regardless of their makeup. When was the last time you changed your password? If you have not done so recently, we highly recommend that you do so.

Overall, when used wisely, the internet provides an abundance of great resources that will help students succeed in school, in their career and in life. Teaching them how to navigate and how to be safe online happens in both their classrooms as well as in classes with their library media specialist. By encouraging kids to question what they see and hear online, we, in the Rosendale-Brandon School District, are training them to think critically about information. With strong media-literacy skills, they’ll be informed, engaged, and less likely to be taken in by fake news.



Visualizing one minute on the internet - Infographic from @LoriLewis and @OfficiallyChadd from the article, *What Happens in an Internet Minute in 2019?* by Jeff Desjardins, March 13, 2019.

RI 5th Graders Go to Bubolz

5th Grade Teacher Jill Jochimsen

On Wednesday, May 15th, Rosendale Intermediate 5th graders enjoyed a field trip to the Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve in Appleton, WI. The students participated in two programs during their day at the Preserve. Through the Deer Tracks and Trails program, the 5th graders learned about the adaptations, signs, urban management strategies, and predator/prey relationships for whitetail deer, our Wisconsin’s state wildlife animal.

In GPS/Geocaching, students learned what GPS means, why it is important, and how GPS is used in the real world. Using handheld GPS devices, the 5th graders broke up into teams to go geocaching to locate a “cache” or container that is hidden outdoors. It’s kind of like a treasure hunt! Typically you open the container to write down your name or team name and place it back where you found it for other geocachers to enjoy. According to geocaching.com, there are 1,608 geocaches around the Fond du Lac area. All you need to do is download the Geocaching® app on your phone to try it out for yourself. It is a great summer time adventure activity for the family!



Harley Langenfeld, Cora Barthels, Eve Clark, Savannah Stahmann, and Cecilia Knoke.



Wyatt Redman, Beckett Weisgerber, Sydney Houle, Adalynn Last, and Josie Vande Berg.



Kevin Nicholson, Elaine Mielke, Chase Krozell, Chris McGraw, and Libby Manowske



Jack Burns, Mindy Burns, Irelynn Fry, Cohen Schellin, and Anasofia Way