



MEDIA AWARENESS NETWORK

www.media-awareness.ca

Level: Grades 8-10

About the Author

Jane Tallim is MNet's Education Director.

This lesson was created with the financial assistance of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program.

Lesson Plan

Thinking About Hate

Overview

In this lesson, students develop critical thinking skills to authenticate online information and to recognize bias and hatred on the Internet.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- ◆ understand Canadian law as it relates to the spreading of hate messages
- ◆ recognize the blatant and subtle ways in which hatred is promoted in society
- ◆ recognize the ways in which hatred may be promoted on the Internet
- ◆ acknowledge their own responsibility to take action when they encounter hate
- ◆ articulate their own attitudes towards hatred
- ◆ understand the importance of authenticating online information
- ◆ develop strategies to authenticate online information

Preparation and Materials

- ◆ [Teaching Zack to Think](#)
- ◆ [Thinking About What We've Found](#)
- ◆ [Hate Propaganda and Hate Crime](#)

The Lesson

Discussing and Representing

Ask students:

- ◆ In Canada, is it illegal to spread or promote hatred? (*The answer is yes: the Criminal Code of Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms the*

Canadian Human Rights Act, the Broadcasting Act and the Immigration Act all address hate mongering.)

- ◆ Are hate crimes always easy to identify?
- ◆ List some of the more blatant ways in which certain groups promote hatred. *(Examples might include: hateful leaflets, hate graffiti, recorded telephone messages inciting hatred against a group, posters depicting distorted images of a group, public speeches promoting hatred against an individual or group, hate messages on the Internet.)*
- ◆ List some of the more subtle ways in which hatred can be promoted. *(Answers might include the use of "othering," where people are marginalized and made to appear "different" from the rest of us. Bias may be used to provide only one perspective on an issue. Perpetuation of stereotypes, based on generalizations about whole groups of people, can also fuel misconceptions. The use of humor – where animosity is justified by the idea that it's "only a joke" is another common form of subtle hatred.)*
- ◆ Distribute the pamphlet Hate Propaganda and Hate Crime. Discuss the main points with students.

Hate and the Internet

- ◆ Why might the Internet be an appealing medium for hate mongers? *(Anyone can publish their views online – easily, inexpensively and fairly anonymously; there are few "gatekeepers" to monitor what's put up; there's a perception that Web sites can't easily be found by the law.)*

- ◆ Who's spreading hate online?

According to the American Anti-Defamation League, the main hate mongers on the Net include:

- *extremists who are seeking credibility*
 - *holocaust deniers*
 - *Identity Adherents (various groups belonging to a pseudo-religious movement that promotes racism and anti-Semitism)*
 - *KKK members*
 - *Neo-Nazis*
 - *Racist skinheads*

 - *Self-proclaimed "churches" (such as the anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church and the World Church of the Creator – one of the fastest growing hate groups in the U.S.)*
- ◆ Who's most likely to be targeted online? *(The most frequent types of hate found on the Internet are fueled by racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia. Women, people with disabilities, people from various religious backgrounds,*

immigrants, visible minorities and even medical doctors are also targeted by hate on the Internet. The "hit list" doesn't stop there, though. Anybody can be targeted.)

- ♦ Have any of you encountered hateful material online? What was it? Did you do anything about it?

Class Activities

Activity One: Taking Action

- ♦ If computers are available, have students visit MNet's [Responding to Online Hate](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/online_hate/index.cfm)(http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/online_hate/index.cfm) section to explore the various ways in which they can take action against hate on the Internet.

Activity Two: Confirming Online Information

It's easy to spot blatant forms of hate. However, organizations that monitor hate on the Internet have noticed that hate groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated in spreading their messages. A recent example includes a Web site that appeared to be a tribute site to Martin Luther King –produced by a white supremacist organization. Although they never mentioned "race," the purpose of the site was to discredit Dr. King and his work. Another Web site uses the cloak of "Canadian nationalism" as a way to make disparaging remarks about immigrants.

Luckily, the Internet contains lots of tools that can help you determine the credibility of what you find online. The following activity features the true story of a high school student who got taken in by a revisionist Web site, and information about what you can do to make sure that the same thing doesn't happen to you!

- ♦ Distribute [Teaching Zack to Think](#) to students.
- ♦ Once they've read the scenario, brainstorm strategies Zak could have used to authenticate the information he found.
- ♦ Distribute [Thinking About What We've Found](#) and review the suggested strategies with students.

Remind students that these techniques are helpful tools for authenticating any online information – not just material that may be biased or hateful.

Evaluation

- ♦ Group summaries
- ♦ Class participation

Teaching Zack to Think



The original version of this document was written by Alan November for the September 1998 edition of *High School Principal Magazine*. The original online version of this article can be found on the Educational Renaissance Planners web site. Adapted with permission.

As more and more students access the Internet for research, it's essential that they learn how to validate online information. The Internet is a place where you can find "proof" of essentially any belief system that you can imagine. And, for too many students, "*If it's on the Internet, it must be true.*"

The following story is also true.

Fourteen year old Zack was asked to research a unique topic for his history class. Zack knew a bit about using reliable sources on the Internet, so when he found some information on a Web page on the Northwestern University site he felt sure that he had found a reliable source of information for his project. The topic was unique too—Holocaust Revisionism—Zack had never heard of that before, so he decided to write his history paper on "How the Holocaust Never Happened."

Zack found his "information" from a Web page at <http://pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/>, titled "Home Web Page of Arthur R. Butz." On his low-key home page, Butz explained that he wrote "A short introduction to the study of Holocaust revisionism" and that his material was intended for "advanced students of Holocaust revisionism." At the top of the page Butz identified himself as "Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Northwestern University."

His article began with the following:

I see three principal reasons for the widespread but erroneous belief in the legend of millions of Jews killed by the Germans during World War II:

US and British troops found horrible piles of corpses in the west German camps they captured in 1945 ..., there are no longer large communities of Jews in Poland, and historians generally support the legend.

During both world wars Germany was forced to fight typhus, carried by lice ... that is why all accounts of entry into the German concentration camps speak of shaving of hair and showering and other delousing procedures, such as treatment of quarters with the pesticide Zyklon. That was also the main reason for a high death rate in the camps, and the crematoria ...

Look at the above situation from the perspective of a 14-year-old, untrained to think critically about information. He's researching the Holocaust, and suddenly finds this Web page. His teacher told him to find a unique topic, and this certainly fit the bill. The page is simple and clear. It's written in a calm, logical tone. The page is clearly intended for experts in its field. Best of all is the source: Northwestern University!

And a professor to boot! Perfect.

Or is it?

Outline some of the methods Zack could have used to critically evaluate the information that he found on Professor Butz's Web page. What clues may have indicated that this Web page wasn't as reliable a source of information as it initially appeared to be?

Check Your Answers

Check here(http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/internet/thinking_about_what.cfm>) for some suggestions and strategies to help Zack verify the information that he has found.

Thinking About What We've Found



The original version of this document was written by Alan November for the September 1998 edition of *High School Principal Magazine*. The original online version of this article can be found on the Educational Renaissance Planners web site. Adapted with permission.

The fact is, that kids will increasingly depend on the Internet for information, so it's important that they cultivate ways to evaluate their findings. Zack could have used some, or all, of the following techniques to decide whether Professor Butz's site was a legitimate source for information.

Purpose

Try to ascertain a Web site's purpose. What is it trying to do? Why was it created? Most Web sites are designed to sell services and products, present information, put ideas forward, or entertain. Many sites do several of these at once.

A Web site's purpose will not always be clear. Look at Butz's site. His purpose is surely advocacy, although he comes across as an objective information provider, especially in the closing sentence of his article: "*Surely any thoughtful person must be skeptical.*" Would that ring any warning bells for a 14-year-old? Would a ninth grader know how to distinguish between objective information and propoganda?

Understand the purpose(s) of a Web site, and that those purpose(s) may not be entirely obvious.

Author

The next step in validation involves the site's author. We all know that it's easy to fool people. Many people, especially kids, will believe someone if he or she sounds authoritative. Butz is a professor, sure, but he's an *Engineering* professor. How does that qualify him to speak as an expert on the Holocaust? It doesn't. But people see "Professor" and take what he says seriously.

Zack didn't know anything about Butz, but could have researched his background. Profusion (<http://www.profusion.com>) is a multi-search engine that takes queries, and searches using several search engines at once, including AltaVista, Excite, Infoseek, Lycos, and Yahoo.

If Zack ran a search for "Arthur Butz," he would find Butz's name on a page titled "Holocaust Deniers" at the Web site for the anti-hate organization *HateWatch* (<http://hatewatch.org>). Similarly, Zack would find Butz's article at a second hate directory site listed under "A Guide to Hate Groups on the Internet: Hate Books, Newsletters and Articles". Zack would find Butz mentioned negatively in a March 1998 *USA Today* article titled, "College anti-Semitism on the rise, according to new report." Zack would also find Butz's book described as popular among "anti-Semites" in a review of Deborah Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust*.

If Zack had run this multi-search on Butz, he would have seen how other people categorize Butz' work.

Establish the credibility of the author.

Meta-Web Information

"Meta-Web Information" allows Zack to look at Web sites as part of the Internet; in other words, Meta-Web information validates Web pages solely within the context of other Web pages.

Let's start with the URL, or address, of a Web page. Kids need to know when they're accessing a personal home page. Most Internet Service Providers give their subscribers a few megabytes of free space on a Web server to use as they please.

Here are two sample URLs: <<http://www.cdsinet.net/users/bartlett>> and <<http://www.icon-stl.net/~stefan/>>. An experienced Web user knows that both URLs point to personal home pages.

In the first example, the word "**users**" is the tip-off. "**bartlett**" is the user name of someone who accesses the Internet through cdsinet.net. In the second example, focus on the ~. A tilde (~) indicates a Web site that has been created by someone given space on a Web server. "**stefan**" is the user name of someone who accesses the Internet through icon-stl.net.

Knowing the above, if Zack had looked at Butz's URL -

<<http://pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/>> - he'd have seen the ~, a dead giveaway that this is a personal Web site. Instead of assuming that Butz's Web site was sponsored by Northwestern University, Zack would have known that it was equivalent to a bulletin board posted outside an office.

Just as Zack can know something about individuals by their clothing, he can learn about a Web site by looking at its URL. Clothing tells us a lot, but the company a person keeps tells us more. Learning how a Web page interacts within the network of all other Web sites is valuable information.

Zack has a powerful tool that can place a Web site in context - the link command.

To apply the link command to Butz, Zack should go to AltaVista at

<http://www.altavista.com>, type

<**link:pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/index.html**> (*without brackets and without a space after the colon*), and then click the Search button.

The search will bring Zack nothing. But if he truncates the URL and enters:

<**link:pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abutz/**> it *does* work. AltaVista listed 879 Web sites that linked to Butz's Web page.

The 879 Web sites referencing Butz basically fall into two categories: hate monitors and hatemongers. For hate monitors, Butz is a shining example of a Holocaust denier. Among the hatemongers, Butz is a star. Once you see who thinks Butz is a great source of information, the game is up. Could there be any doubt when one finds links to Butz on the same page as links to Online Fascist Resource Page,

Knights of Michigan KKK, White Power Central, and Texas Aryan Nationalist Skinheads?

Use meta-information sources.

A Happy Ending

In the end Zack's high school arranged for an interview with a Jewish woman who lived in Europe during World War II. It is always a good idea to look beyond the Internet for sources of authentic information.

Explore a variety of resources.

Hate Propaganda and Hate Crime



Metropolitan Toronto Police and the
League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, 1996.
Republished with permission.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The Metropolitan Toronto Police have made a firm pledge to deal with hate oriented criminal activity.

When crime occurs in a community, it is both fitting and proper that it causes concern for those who live and work within that community. That concern must be intensified, when the perpetrator's motive for such crime is based on the prejudice they might have toward the victimized person or group, simply because they are perceived to be different, and not as a result of anything they have done.

What is HATE CRIME?

HATE CRIME is a **criminal offence** committed against a person, group of people or property that is based upon **race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability**.

HATE CRIME strikes at the very heart of the victim's identity.

When a person or group of people becomes a victim of a HATE CRIME it affects their family, relatives and an entire community.

**INTIMIDATION...
FEAR...
TERROR...
RIPPLES THROUGH THE COMMUNITY.**

What is HATE PROPAGANDA?

In terms of law, the Hate Propaganda section of the Criminal Code is broken down into two sections and includes the following:

1. The first section, "Advocating Genocide" states that an offence is committed when anyone advocates or promotes genocide.

The legal definition of genocide is "with intent to destroy in whole or in part any identifiable group", namely:

- a) Killing members of the group, or
- b) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.

In this section, "Identifiable Group" means any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion or ethnic origin.

2. The second section deals with the "Public Incitement of Hatred". This offence is committed when someone communicates statements in a public place, and incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

The section also states that an offence is committed when anyone who communicates statements, other than in private conversation, willfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group.

"Communicating" includes words spoken or written or recorded electronically, electromagnetically or otherwise, and gestures, signs or other visible representations.

It should be noted that no proceedings under these sections can be instituted without the consent of the Attorney General.

What to do if you are a victim of HATE CRIME

At this stage, your help and cooperation is vital in combating this form of criminal activity. We realize that you may be upset or angry and this may be your first contact with the judicial system. However, it is important to answer questions put to you regardless of how unrelated or irrelevant some may appear at the time. The police may be aware of other similar offences and your answers could help to establish a pattern of criminal activity.

If you come across any hate propaganda, posters or graffiti that promote hate or see tombstones in an ethnoculturally identifiable cemetery that have been damaged or defaced, or anyone who is being approached by another or a group promoting hate, take the following steps:

- ◆ Keep all relevant material.

- ◆ Record all relevant information regarding the incident (name and description of those responsible, when and where the incident occurred, etc.).
- ◆ In situations involving printed material (i.e. letter, poster, flyer, etc.) promoting hate, keep all relevant material. Do not attempt to touch or remove anything. The fewer people that handle the article, the greater the success rate in obtaining fingerprints.
- ◆ In cases where there is graffiti in public view, ensure that the police attend or a photograph has been taken before removing the messages.
- ◆ If the hate propaganda material is hand delivered, attempt to note the license plate number of the vehicle that the suspect is driving and a description of the person. Do not attempt to confront the suspect. If the suspect is in the area, call the emergency number 9-1-1.
- ◆ If the hate propaganda is in the form of a message left on a telephone answering machine, do not erase the message.

In any of these circumstances, it is vital that you call the police to ensure that the incident is properly investigated.

If you suspect that hate motivated crime is taking place, in any form, in your community, **call the police and seek assistance**. You may have questions and concerns. Do not hesitate to ask them either at the time of the investigation or in any follow-up telephone calls to the police.

If at a later date you are called as a witness in a court trial, ask for a full explanation of the proceedings and your responsibilities. It is **your right to know**.

One **of the responsibilities of your police service is to offer you help and advice with** respect to any form of hate crime.

**Please call.
Help us to help you.**

Combating hate crime effectively requires a high level of police and community interaction, as well as citizen involvement.

**REMEMBER...
It is of vital importance that
HATE CRIMES
be reported to the police.**

The **Ontario Human Rights Code** protects your right to work, do business, obtain accommodation, receive services and go to school in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. For example, graffiti or other symbols that are racial slurs are a form of discrimination and are illegal under the Code. **The Ontario Human Rights Commission** is responsible for protecting these rights on such grounds as race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age and handicap.
[Contact your local police for more information](#)



**Metropolitan Toronto
Police**



**League for Human
Rights of
B'nai Brith Canada**



**Police and Community
Working Together**

This pamphlet was produced by the Metropolitan Toronto Police and the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, 1996.
Republished with permission.