5-1-2009

In Review: Going beyond Google: The Invisible Web in learning and teaching

David Pavelich
Duke University Libraries

Recommended Citation

In Review:
Going beyond Google: The Invisible Web
in learning and teaching.

Devine, J. & Egger-Sider, F. (2009). *Going beyond Google: The Invisible Web in learning and teaching*. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman. 156 pp. ISBN 978-1-55570-633-3. $65.00.

Going beyond Google proceeds from the historical moment when "Google" became a verb in our vocabulary. "Google" is listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and more common now than the time-honored phrase, "to look up." This repurposing of a commercial name (Google) to stand in for an action (searching for information) is symptomatic of a broader and more pressing contemporary issue.

Students, faculty, and researchers have become overly dependent, say Jane Devine and Francine Egger-Sider, on general purpose search engines which search only a fraction of the electronic content available online, and researchers are generally uninformed about the Hidden or Invisible Web. Their information needs may be better met through the Invisible Web, which includes databases, "deep" web sites, and very current content, among other resources. One astonishing statistic, quoted by the authors, is the estimate that more than 220 billion database-driven web pages are invisible to Google.

The authors of *Going Beyond Google* are experts on this subject and are on the staff at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, NY. Devine, Chief Librarian, and Egger-Sider, Coordinator of Technical Services, have published on the Invisible Web in the past, most notably in *Libraries and Google* (2005) and *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* (2004).

Their book is aimed at librarians and teachers, and it most broadly advocates for information literacy: how to search for, access, evaluate, and make use of information. The crux of *Going Beyond Google* is its third chapter, "Introducing Students to the Invisible Web," where Devine and Egger-Sider argue convincingly that "introducing the Invisible Web to students should and can take place in stages." The two authors propose three stages in such

instruction: first, Web searching basics; second, presenting the Invisible Web; and finally, developing students' appreciation and use of the "riches of the Invisible Web," the stage when students "will recognize the Invisible Web as a collection of valuable resources to be used when and if needed."

This central chapter maps these three stages to the standards developed by both the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Association of School Librarians. Devine and Egger-Sider helpfully outline key concepts for each stage and provide sample assignments. They also remind us where such instruction can take place: the reference desk, one-time instruction sessions, credit courses, and online. The book would be extremely useful when preparing a syllabus or desired outcomes for an instruction session.

Going Beyond Google offers the reader a tremendous amount of useable information. One suspects that Devine and Egger-Sider will build on this terrific achievement, and they have left space for possible future projects. Chapter 4, "Further Exploration of the Invisible Web," sketches out "activities that can help anyone learn more about the Invisible Web." These activities seem best suited to an information literacy course which meets over several sessions, rather than a one-time instruction session, and similar recommendations for one-time sessions would be extremely useful. Chapter 5, "Internet Research Strategies: An Example," presents a "fictionalized case study" of a student undertaking research on microcredit, but while the fictional example is useful, an actual case study would prove the authors' theses much more dramatically. As the authors themselves note, the nature of the Invisible Web is "constantly in flux," and such continuous investigation will prove crucial to understanding it.

Reviewer: David Pavelich
               Reference and Instruction Librarian
               Special Collections Research Center
               University of Chicago Library