PART I: Terms and Definitions

Internet
The Internet is a network of networks, the total number of all computers that are connected to each other throughout the world by cable, telephone wire, wireless and/or satellite systems. It is the highway on which traffic to and from computer systems travels.

World Wide Web
The World Wide Web is all the linked web content (pages, files, documents) that exists across all networked computer systems.

Browser
A browser is a program that allows you to find and access content on the World Wide Web. It uses the Internet to request and receive information and content. Examples of popular browsers include Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, Chrome and Edge.

Search Engine
A search engine is a program that indexes pages, documents and files on the World Wide Web, and presents these in a specific order according to a 'query' or search command that is entered. Google and Bing are the most popular. DuckDuckGo promises no tracking.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)
An ISP is a company that provides users with access to the internet through a subscription payment schedule. Examples of ISP's include TELUS, Bell, Rogers, Shaw, AT&T and Verizon.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)
A URL is a specific character string that constitutes a reference to a resource. In most web browsers, the URL of a web page is displayed on top inside an address bar.

PART II: Print vs. Web

Unlike traditional print resources, such as books, newspapers, and magazines, information available on the Internet is not regulated for content – Anyone can publish anything!

It can be hard to know who the Author is, if they are portraying themselves accurately, what their purpose is, if they are giving opinions or facts, or if they are being honest.

The responsibility to verify is on you!

Print Resources	Online Information
• Quality standards are controlled through systems of checks and balances • In most printed materials an author has been verified to be who they claim to be • Linear format for logical and effective organization • Print materials are stable – once printed they are fixed and unchanging	• Anyone can post anything without quality control • There is no consistent monitoring of publishing (unless moderation is specified). Biases, hidden agendas, distorted perspectives, etc. are not monitored • No standard format • It is unstable – things can be changed and removed easily, and then are gone forever • Hyperlinks are used to organize content, and are not linear, but are a part of "the web of information"

PART III: Criteria for Evaluating Online Information

If you are unfamiliar about a piece of information that you have found, or the information gives you a bad gut feeling, or stirs intense emotion in you it's a good idea to perform a fact check on it.

Start your Fact Checking Process with examining the website – starting with the examination criteria:
- o How to:
  - You will need to examine different pages of the site:
    - Start with the page you are on
    - Then go to the Home page, About page, Contact page
  - This may be enough to verify the content of a page, if not, you will need to perform a Lateral Search

Before learning the steps of how to Fact Check, let's take a look at the criteria to evaluate in the Fact Checking Process:

1. Authority
   - o Who is the author or creator? Ie. Who is responsible for the intellectual content?
     - o What to look for:
       - o Name

- o   Credentials or affiliations
- o   Contact information
- o   Link to Homepage or Organization
- o   Domain of URL

2.   Purpose
- o   Can you identify the creator's motive for creating or publishing this information?
  - o   What to look for:
    - o   Who is the intended audience?
      - o   For experts or scholarly purposes
      - o   For the general public or novices
    - o   What is the purpose?
      - o   Inform or teach
      - o   Explain or enlighten
      - o   Persuade
      - o   Sell a product or service

3.   Objectivity
- o   Can you detect any bias in the writing? How subjective is the Author in their opinion?
  - o   What to look for:
    - o   Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
    - o   Is the point of view objective and impartial?
    - o   Do they use emotion-rousing language?
    - o   Do you seen any affiliations that could influence bias
    - o   Is there any official approval/sponsorship?

4.   Accuracy
- o   How factual and truthful is the information?
  - o   What to look for:
    - o   Are sources for information clearly listed and easy to verify?
    - o   Is it clear who is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of the content?
    - o   Can you find independent sources that can verify the information?
    - o   Do you already have knowledge that confirms the topic? (be careful not to create a Filter Bubble for yourself by only using this!)
    - o   Has the information been reviewed or referenced?
    - o   Does the content have any spelling, grammatical, or typographic errors?

5.   Reliability & Credibility
- o   Why should you believe this information or the creator?
  - o   What to look for:
    - o   Does the content appear to be valid, well researched, and supported by evidence?

- o What, where, and how?
- o Are quotes and assertions backed by sources?
  - o How many?
  - o Can they be found and verified?
- o Do any institutions/organizations support this information?
  - o What institution? Have you heard of them before? Can you find out about their reputation? Are they qualified to have an opinion on this topic?
- o Is there a non-online version of this content that you can check?

6. Timeliness
   - o Some information becomes less relevant and accurate as time passes (primarily in science and technology, but also in social sciences). It is important to check when information was discovered and published to verify if it is still relevant.
     - o What to look for:
       - o Is there a publication date?
       - o Has content been kept up-to-date? Can you see editing dates posted?
       - o Is there an indication of when the site was last updated? Or how frequently it is updated?

7. Links
   - o Links are generally the sources we are looking for when evaluating content.
     - o What to look for:
       - o Are links related to the content and useful to for the purpose of the site?
       - o Are links current? Or have they become dead?
       - o What kinds of sources are linked?
       - o Are the links evaluated or annotated?
   - o Note: Web Page links will very in quality as much as original content; therefore, you must evaluate each website independently.

PART IV: The Gut Check

When looking at information online it is important to trust your gut. When something feels not right about a website or the content on it that is a good indication that you should be performing a fact check.

A strong emotional response (either positive or negative) is also a good indication that something might not be right with the content. If you find you are having an elevated emotional response to content you should definitely fact check it, especially before sharing. If it seems too good or too bad to be true, it probably is.

PART V: Living in a "Filter" Bubble

It is possible to create an isolated online world for yourself, and it's called a Filter Bubble.
A filter bubble is akin to creating an online world with a specific world view, that does not allow in content or information that counters or contradicts anything already established in that world.
This happens because:

1. Algorithms learn from your online behavior
2. The algorithms will try to keep you online or on a site as long as possible by giving you more content similar to what you have already viewed
3. They can then stop giving you content or information outside of your likes, interests, or personal biases to keep you online longer

If you believe you are creating a bubble and want to pop it, make sure to visit other site and look at, like, and comment on different types of content
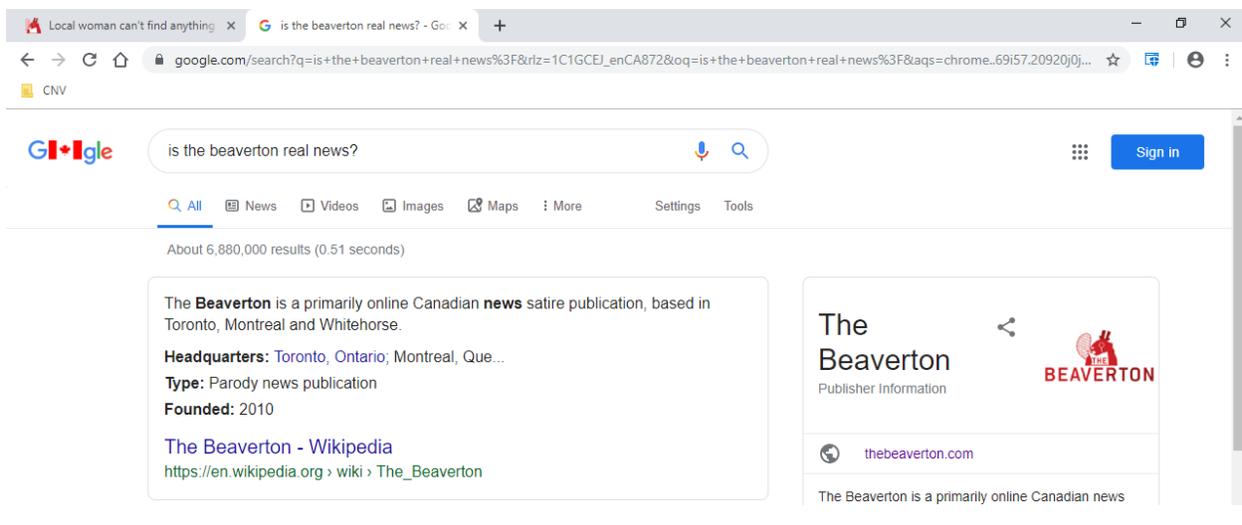
PART VI: Lateral Searching

Lateral Searching is like following a string in a web to find where it starts and what is connected to it. This is akin to checking references or a bibliography, or looking up reviews.

- o How to:
  - Open a new tab
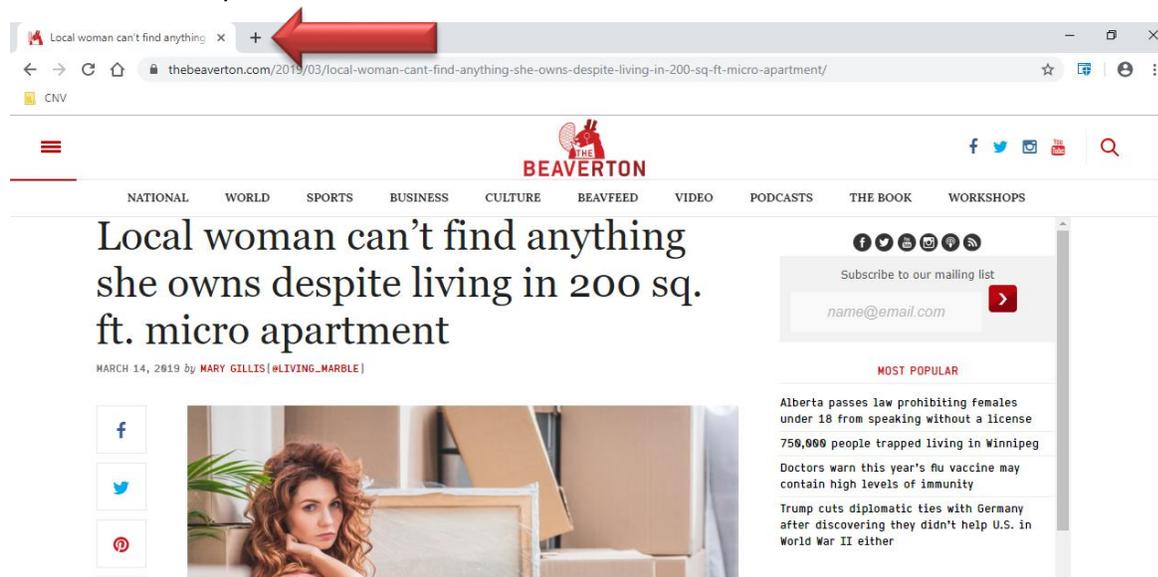
- Preform a search:
  - Look up the Author, Organization, or statement

- Typically the first link will take you back to where you started (depending on your search query), so generally you scroll past the first link – scroll down until you find reviews or appraisals
  - Sometimes a definition window will appear on the right side of the screen, if your search query is for something well known
- Try to find as many corroborators as you can, or use a trusted fact checking site. Some long trusted fact checking sites are:
  - https://www.snopes.com/
  - http://factscan.ca/
  - https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/
  - https://www.politifact.com/
- Repeat until satisfied

PART VII: Digital Citizenship and Netiquette

Digital Citizenship is the process of a person using Information Technology (IT), or digital information to engage with society and community.

According to digitalcitizenship.net, the nine elements (or themes) of digital citizenship are:

1. **Digital access**: This is perhaps one of the most fundamental blocks to being a digital citizen. However, due to socioeconomic status, location, and other disabilities- some individuals may not have digital access.
2. **Digital commerce**: This is the ability for users to recognize that much of the economy is regulated online. It also deals with the understanding of the dangers and benefits of online buying, using credit cards online, and so forth.
3. **Digital communication**: This element deals with understanding the variety of online communication mediums such as email, instant messaging, Facebook messenger, the variety of apps, and so forth. There is a standard of etiquette associated with each medium.
4. **Digital literacy**: This deals with the understanding of how to use various digital devices and services. For example, how to properly search for something on a search engine versus a

database. How to use various online logs. Oftentimes many educational institutions will help form an individual's digital literacy.

5. **Digital etiquette**: As discussed in the third element, digital communication, this is the expectation that various mediums require a variety of etiquette. Certain mediums demand more appropriate behavior and language than others.
6. **Digital law**: This is where enforcement occurs for illegal downloads, plagiarizing, hacking, creating viruses, sending spams, identity theft, cyberbullying, and so forth.
7. **Digital rights and responsibilities**: This is the set of rights digital citizens have such as privacy, speech, and so forth.
8. **Digital health**: Digital citizens must be aware of the physical stress placed on their bodies by internet usage. They must be aware to not become overly dependent on the internet causing eye strain, headaches, stress problems, and so on. As well as being aware of the mental health risks of engaging online.
9. **Digital security**: This simply means that citizens must take measures to be safe by practicing using difficult passwords, virus protection, backing up data, and so forth.

Digital Citizenship is a term used to define the appropriate and responsible use of technology among users. Three principles were developed by Mark Ribble to teach digital users how to responsibly use technology to become a digital citizen. The three principles include: respect, educate, and protect. Each principle contains three of the nine elements of digital citizenship.

1. **Respect:** the elements of etiquette, access, and law are used to respect other digital users.
2. **Educate:** the elements of literacy, communication, and commerce are used to learn about the appropriate use of the digital world.
3. **Protect:** the elements of rights and responsibilities, security, and health and wellness are used to remain safe in the digital and non-digital world.

It is important to think about how you want to portray yourself online and engage with others.
- Think about who you want to be online – how do you project that?
  - What persona are you sharing with others?
  - Practice the Golden Rule online
- What kind of content do you want to consume, curate, and share?
  - How does this content relate to your persona?
- Who do you want to connect to?
  - Family, friends, communities
  - Who don't you want to engage with?
  - Don't feed the trolls!

Netiquette
Here are a couple of pointers for online communication etiquette:
- Think before you share
- Be concise
- Remember that typing in capital letters is SHOUTING
  - Use **Bold** or <u>Underline</u> instead
- Never send an email when you're angry or upset

- Don't leave the subject line blank
- Proofread
- Delete spam, jokes and chain letters
- Report inappropriate content
- Be kind if others make mistakes

PART VIII: Learn More

There are lots of resources to explore.

Library Resources

Google **North Vancouver City Library**, or type **nvcl.ca** in the URL bar

- Click on **Using the Library**, then on **Technology Training** (under Services), and **Computer Classes.** Scroll to **Intro to Internet**, then click on **Class Resources**. Explore the options!
- Try a tutorial on **Lynda.com**, FREE from the library website: **www.nvcl.ca > Research & Learn (tab, centre top) > Databases A-Z > Lynda.com**. Try "Digital Literacy" or "Media Literacy"
- Look for books on the third floor at Row 26
- Set an appointment with a Tech Connect staff member by calling 604 982 3941 or emailing techconnect@cnv.org

Other Resources

- Check out Google Guide: www.googleguide.com
- Access free online tutorials http://www.gcflearnfree.org/internet101
- Crash Course Series on Youtube – Navigating Digital Information
    - https://youtu.be/pLlv2o6UfTU