



Why use Digital Knowledge Central (DKC) databases instead of Google?

The Digital Knowledge Central (DKC) databases provide quick access to information on the Web such as newspaper and magazine articles, biographies, book reviews, country reports, images and more. The databases provide access to information that is safe, accurate, current, validated, copyright-clear, and organized. Information in databases can be searched using different age-appropriate interfaces, and results can be matched to each student individual reading ability. Searching for information is precise, quick and convenient.

When a student is surfing the World Wide Web using a search engine like Google, he/she is searching information among billions of sites, both good and bad. Since anyone can publish online, there is a large amount of information that is unsafe, unreliable, inaccurate, outdated and biased. In addition, annoying pop-up ads and animated images cause distractions and frustration. Alan November calls the World Wide Web the “wild wild west of information with no sheriff in town.”

Searching the Web using a search engine poses several problems to students.

- 1) How can kids (and adults) make the distinction between the “good” and the “bad” information? Validating information online requires practice and skills that not everyone is familiar with. On the other hand, online databases contain information that has been reviewed by competent, knowledgeable people.
- 2) How can users find exactly what they are looking for? Most of the time, results are in the thousands or millions. In the case of Digital Knowledge Central (DKC) databases, interfaces provide limiters and expanders (i.e., content area, type of work, date, source, format, lexile) that allow for concise searches and limited results.
- 3) With the exception of some great sites like NASA, the Library of Congress, National Geographic, PBS and others, the good information is usually not free. Online databases are subscription services. The cost of DKC ensures that students, teachers, and the student immediate families have anytime, anywhere access to quality information.
- 4) Most information on the Web is copyrighted and therefore students should not use unless expressed written permission from the author is granted. Copying and pasting or saving information from the Web without the author’s consent is against the law and can result in a costly consequence. Digital Knowledge Central (DKC) databases contain copyrighted material, but by paying a participation fee, students and teachers are entitled to use the information for educational, non-commercial purposes as long as they provide credit to their sources.