

What Will You Click on Next?

Howard Rheingold—author of *Net Smart: How to Thrive Online*—argues that one of the most important skills to master is the ability to focus your attention while searching on the web (as cited in Barseghian, 2012). Rheingold suggests that learners should write down the three things that they want to get done *before* heading online. Then, they should make conscious choices about what to click on while surfing, only selecting sites that are likely to help them move toward their final goal. Use this handout to help guide *your* choices while working online today.

Questions to Answer Before Researching

1. **What three things are you hoping to accomplish while working on the web today?** If today were a perfect research day, what products or pieces of information would you walk away from the computer with?
2. **What kinds of resources or websites typically distract you while you are working online?** Do you catch yourself texting all the time? Checking your social sites? Playing online games?
3. **How are you going to avoid those distractions?** Would turning your phone off help? How about disabling notifications on your social sites?

Consider the following questions for each of the sites that you are thinking about exploring.

4. **What makes you think that this website is worth giving your limited time and attention to?** Which of your three daily goals do you think it will help you to accomplish?
5. **How long will you spend searching for information on this website before deciding to look elsewhere?** Does your confidence in the quality of this website change your plans for your remaining research time?

6. **What searching and sorting tools can you find on this website?** Is there a search bar? Are there category and/or topic links? Can you find lists of related resources?

Questions to Answer After Researching

1. **On a scale of one to five, how would you rate your productivity during today's research session?** Did you accomplish all of your key goals? Did you get distracted at all while researching? What caused you to lose focus?

2. **Which of the websites that you explored today were the most valuable?** Do these websites share anything in common? What can you be on the lookout for the next time you research to find more sites just like these?

3. **Which of the websites that you explored today were the least valuable?** Do these websites share anything in common? What can you be on the lookout for the next time you research to identify these websites early and avoid wasting time?

Source: Barseghian, T. (2012, August 31). What will you click on next? Focusing our attention online [Web log post]. Accessed at <http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/2012/08/what-will-you-click-on-next-focusing-our-attention-online> on October 21, 2014.