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Follow the Links

Now it's time to be a real website detective. Following the links is all about clicking off the page to determine the next layer of information and whether that information is really legitimate or not.

Let's go to **www.zapatopi.net/treeoctopus**. It's a great looking site, isn't it? It has photos, convincing information; it pleads for a convincing cause. But is it trustworthy?

But if we follow the links, we find that they dead-end at questionable places that certainly don't seem charitable!

Start clicking on the links that are provided. Write down the websites that they connect to. Perhaps they are a clue as to the legitimacy of the site.

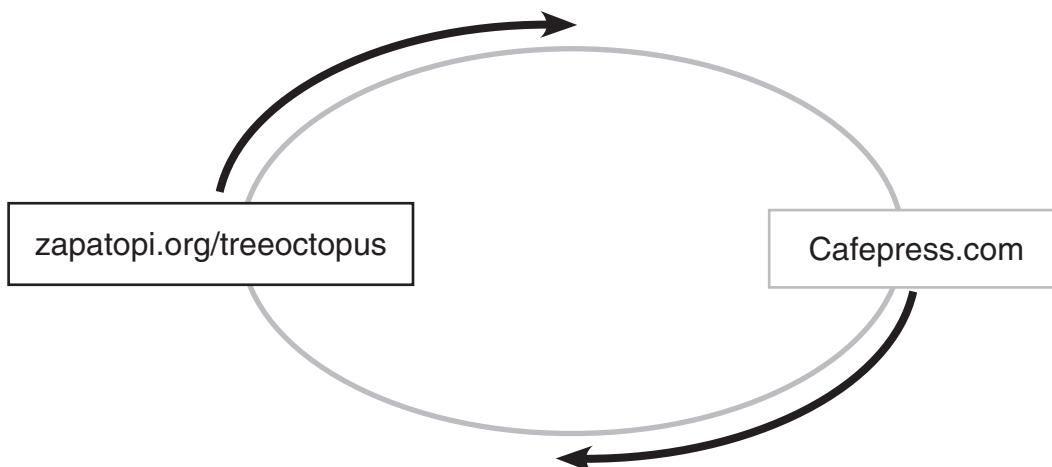
Click on the icon in the most top-left hand corner of the page next to the letters ZPI. Where does it link?

Hmmmm, "Productions," eh? Perhaps this is a produced site and not an informative one.

From the page you started on, click on the bumper sticker ad in the left-hand menu. Where does that connect you?

But notice that there's a line on this page that says, "Learn more about this intelligent and inquisitive cephalopod at: zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/" What does that mean to you? That's right, it's circular research.

Circular research is when you click on one site, then follow a link that uses the first site as its primary link again. Think of it like a circle.



Evidence of legitimacy must come from external sites. A site can't prove all by itself that it is trustworthy. You have to explore beyond the site.



Formal Writing Versus Texting

Look, we all know that there is a formal language that we use in the classroom when we communicate, whether it's through writing or talking. For instance, we don't use "isn't" in our formal writing; instead we use "is not." But we also know an online texting language has developed that requires its own literacy. The question is: does texting have a place in the classroom?

Many years ago, there was this written language of sorts called "shorthand." You could take classes in shorthand to learn how to write notes quickly. What if texting is the new shorthand? Perhaps it can be used for note taking and brainstorming.

Learning how to write in the language of texting has a place in the classroom when you have to take notes quickly. When you are studying later, you will need to be able to translate what you wrote. It is also very valuable to then look at your notes and write them out in formal language as a way to help memorize the material.

Translation activities

1. Look at the excerpt from the texting dictionary below. Use it as a guide in translating the lines below which are written in texting.

lol = laugh out loud	idk = I don't know
ttul = talk to you later	omg = oh my gosh
u = you	jk = just kidding
c = see	2 = to/too
ne = any	2mrw = tomorrow
b4 = before	b/c = because

OMG, I just got my grade back 2day in history. I got a C b/c I couldn't find my textbook. Jk, I got a B. Idk when the homework's due, do u?

2. Something interesting about texting is that it is a language that is constantly evolving and new "words" are invented every day, even by students like you. What new texting words can you invent and add to your dictionary? Can you think of ways to shorthand words from your history class? From your math class? Write three subject-specific words on the lines below and then translate them into the texting words on the opposite lines provided.



Twitter™ as Literary Response

Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a VLC, or virtual learning community. That is, it allows a group of people to follow each other throughout the day and communicate their thoughts and actions.

Twitter allows people to follow other people in their profession, or to even ask people for help to solve questions quickly.

The key trick with Twitter, however, is that you can only write 140 characters or your thought is cut off. This keeps people writing quick, succinct messages that are only the main idea of what they want to say. Which is why Twittering is such an interesting way to write summaries.

Let's review: When we are referring to the Internet, what is a character?

So, in other words, if I were to say, "I would rather read the book than see the movie," the word count would be 10, but the character count would be 47.

Think about a story that you have read this year. Write a Twitter update (or "tweet") a summary that is only 120–140 characters in length here:

Now think about that story's theme. Tweet the theme of the story using only 120–140 characters in length here:

How does the main character change in the story? Tweet your response on the lines provided: _____

What is the turning point of the story? _____

Any question can be answered as a tweet as a means to collaborate or brainstorm prior to a more formal essay. Try it next time.