James E. Herring. Improving Students' Web Use and Information Literacy. A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Librarians. London, UK: Facet Publishing, 2011.

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There are many publications on the topic of Web use in education. Among them, the book under review may seem rather undemanding as it addresses the topics and problems covered in more representative publications than this 133-page (without references) manuscript. However, James E. Herring is an internationally acclaimed authority on information literacy and ICT in schools, so his view of the knowledge and skills that teachers and students need to have to study, teach, work and socialize via the Web warrants certain attention and credibility.

His main point in writing this book is to emphasize the fact that information literacy is one of the key aspects of modern education and contemporary society. Most studies of the ability of teachers and teacher libraries to use the resources of the Web 2.0 effectively show, however, that school staff need more advice and in-service training, while students show insufficient ability to use electronic resources and utilize their skills across different subjects and disciplines. Herring's major point is that information literacy goes beyond the ability of students and teaching staff to use computers and search the Web to find information or complete assignments. It is important therefore to teach and learn a range of information literacy skills, which will make students web-alert, web-critical and web-reflective Internet users.

The book is composed of nine chapters, starting from "the big picture" of learning and teaching in modern schools to a projection of the future developments of the Web and the skills students and teachers will need in the 21st century. Some of the chapters are of a more expository nature, such as the explanation of what Web 2.0 is (Chapter 4) or what constitutes information literacy (Chapter 5). Others are more practical, for instance, telling how to evaluate websites (Chapter 3), how to improve student use of the web (Chapter 6) or how to develop websites for students (Chapter 7). The book also provides a very instrumental bibliography, since most of the references can be accessed through the Internet.

Let me outline the highlights and some points of criticism that I have found while reading "Improving Students' Web Use and Information Literacy." In the first chapter, the author addresses the purposes of education and schools of the 21st century, gives a brief outline of two main learning theories — behaviorism and constructivism, and recommends what "a good teacher" should do to effectively incorporate the Web into teaching. This seems like a very ambitions approach — to fit a "big picture" into the 11 pages allocated for the chapter. But the snapshot is accompanied by a bibliography, which can expand our knowledge of theory, while practitioners may find useful a lesson plan template and an example of a lesson plan for a year 9 geography class, which show how information literacy skills can be incorporated into teaching a particular subject. It should be noted, however, that while listing the advantages of the Web for learning and professional development, the author omits to mention the potential of the medium as a vehicle of communication. Numerous projects of educational Web partnerships — from joint inter-

school projects, discussion forums, and thematic blogs to Wiki writing — develop through collaboration the requisite information literacy skills aimed at in other suggested classroom activities. He does include communication tools into his picture later, in Chapter 4, but they should have been listed among discussion of the learning potential of the Web also.

The second chapter is about search engines and effective ways of finding information on the Web. While everyone is familiar with Yahoo and Google, Herring emphasizes that this knowledge is only superficial. Expertise in searching becomes an issue of cost effectiveness for schools, whose staff are not experienced enough to unearth the wealth of concepts, ideas and practices available for improved teaching, learning and professional development. The popular sites are not necessarily the best as there are over 100 search engines[*], which can provide much more information for in-depth research. But even if the staff cannot be persuaded to switch to an alternative search engine, Google's advanced search features can significantly optimize the search. The author explains how to use advanced search features, introduces metasearch and visual search engines, and even suggests a program for in-service training on effective searching.

In the chapter about evaluating websites, Herring makes an important point that not all websites should be used by students because of their lack of monitoring, guidance, wide representation of opinion, inappropriate content and language, and other faults. He introduces a range of evaluation criteria, the most important of which are educational, reliability and technical ones, and again offers an example of a workshop for school staff.

The next two chapters（4 and 5）are of a more informative nature, as has been already mentioned, since they are dedicated to a general description of Web 2.0 and its tools, and to characteristics of information literacy. Talking about the peculiarities of Web 2.0, the author emphasizes that it has fostered a revolution in the way people can use the Net: no longer are they passive users; instead teachers and students can become active creators of information and active respondents to information provided by others. The tools supporting such use of the Web are blogs, wikis, bookmarks, podcasts and other multimedia applications. The effective use of those for educational purposes can be achieved only through the development of information literacy, one of the key abilities that people of the 21st century should have. Everybody agrees now that this part is often missing in teacher training, yet students are expected to be "digital natives," who are digitally literate. However, only a minority of students, according to Herring, can use the Web effectively, find relevant information, and reflect on it. These particular skills comprise information literacy, of which four main models proposed as strategies to use the Web are outlined — the Big 6 model, the ISP model, NSW DET model and PLUS model. Whatever the model used（and students and teachers can develop their own ones on the basis of the former four）it must develop the ability to transfer information literacy skills across the curriculum and over time and become part of students' lifelong learning.

Chapter 6 suggests some guidelines on how to teach students those major skills that make up information literacy, namely how to plan a search, use effective search strategies, evaluate the site and web-based information, reflect on this information and, most importantly, develop a personal model for web

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[*] The Search Engine List can be retrieved from www.Thesearchenginelist.com.

use. Examples of guidance designed by different schools and libraries are suggested as illustrations of practical approaches to the enhancement of informational literacy.

The next two chapters are of equal practical value for readers interested in designing their own learning websites. Both take them step by step through the process — from design to content. While the set of requirements to design may seem challenging to novices, the author alleviates possible uncertainties by suggesting a number of the most common Web 2.0 packages for easy designing of wikis, websites and presentations. As for the content, he suggests developing learning web-sites as e-pathfinders, which should include an introduction to a specific audience, keywords and definitions, subject context and content, information literacy guidance, and mediated resources accompanied by meaningful annotations. Again, as in the preceding sections of the book, these chapters have plentiful visual examples from various schools and different subjects.

The book ends with a projection of future developments of ICT in schools. With rapid development of technology and emergence of Web 3.0, some current tools and applications may become obsolete, while mobile computing and spread of virtual learning environments will introduce new powerful resources for education. What will definitely stay in the picture is information literacy, so skills to use the Web effectively will be even more important for teachers and students in the future.

To conclude, the book is mainly written for teachers and teacher librarians in countries across the world, and although examples pertain to secondary school subjects, it is a very useful book for teaching staff in any educational setting. James E. Herring's manuscript is not an eye-opener for computer geeks familiar with all innovations on the Net and will not be entered as reference for a serious research on didactic potential of Web 2.0. But it is a precise and practical guide for making teachers and students effective users of the Web and has a place in every teacher's library.