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## **Impact of Internet on Historical Research:-A Review**

*Sanjeev Kumar*

*Assistant Professor in Computer Science, Dev Samaj College for Women Ferozpur city, Punjab, india.*

*Anjali Dhawan*

*Assistant Professor in Computer Science, Dev Samaj College for Women Ferozpur city, Punjab, India.*

*Nisha*

*Assistant Professor in Computer Science, Dev Samaj College for Women Ferozpur city, Punjab, india.*

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### **Abstract**

*The idea of this paper is to help scholars to use the gigantic network of interlinked computers recognized as the Internet to find historical sources they can use in their research. It is specially addressed to the student in a college or university history course who is preparing a research assignment, "Using the Internet as a Resource for Historical Research and Writing" will initiate you to some finding aids to help you trace related materials for your research project. Among these are subject directories which provide links to other lists and to specific documents. By exploring these links (underlined or highlighted in the text) one can access other Internet locations. The other principal aid for finding materials is the search engine. That term refers to electronic devices which sweep through as many as several million individual Web pages and other Internet sites, looking for material on a given subject. As in this paper, you will find examples of problems one often encounters while using these finding aids. You will find detailed sections on searching for the two categories of historical research materials, primary sources and secondary sources, and another on how to appraise the sources you find. Also, you will learn how to use the Web to find and evaluate hard-copy books and articles relating to your research project. Finally, there will be a summing up of the prospects and problems of using the Internet for historical research. I hope that you find the paper both valuable and attractive.*

*Keywords: Web, Search engine, Primary and Secondary sources*

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this research paper is to help students and other scholars to use the huge network of interlinked computers known as the Internet to find historical sources they can use in their research. It is especially addressed to the student in a college or university history course who is preparing research assignment (term paper, thesis, or dissertation). Many academic departments and libraries in colleges and universities have begun to produce Web sites with valuable materials. Some commercial enterprises and individuals have also created useful sites. Yet, to many students and some of their professors, the

Internet remains a gigantic and seemingly random repository of facts, opinions, propaganda (much in the form of advertising), self-promoting home pages (some *are* that, some not), etc. Also, you will learn how to use the Web to find and evaluate hard-copy books and articles relating to your research project. You will learn how to find help on the Internet for the writing stage of your project. I hope that you find the site both useful and interesting. Although the Internet has been around for many years, only recently has it become a significant source for historical research. This development has been spurred by the introduction and growth of the World Wide Web, an Internet interface with graphical, sound, and video capabilities. Many academic departments and libraries in colleges and universities have begun to produce Web sites with valuable materials. Some commercial enterprises and individuals have also created useful sites. Also, you will learn how to use the Web to find and evaluate hard-copy books and articles relating to your research project. You will learn how to find help on the Internet for the writing stage of your project. Yet, to many students and some of their professors, the Internet remains a gigantic and seemingly random repository of facts, opinions, propaganda (much in the form of advertising), self-promoting home pages (some *are* that, some not), etc

## **2. History Resources on the Internet with Search Engines**

One way to find sources for a topic is by using search engines. Search engines are electronic devices that scrape through as possible as several million Web pages and other Internet websites looking for references to the word or phrase which you enter in a particular search engine's search box.

## **3. Finding Primary Sources on the Internet**

Primary sources include personal correspondence, diaries, journals, memoirs, autobiographies, and government documents (laws, treaties, reports, ordinances, proceedings, etc.). Some newspaper accounts qualify as well. You can find primary sources on the Internet mainly by using for your research directories and search engines. Each method has its advantages. Subject directories may easily lead you to correct material to your research topic. It is made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### **Some Primary Source Projects on the Internet**

- **The Avalon Project:** This project is, assemble and managed by the Yale Law School, which contains documents relevant to the fields of law, history, economics, politics, diplomacy, and government. The scope of the project is in international level. It is an excellent, growing site.
- **Making of America:** This project developed and maintained by the University of Michigan, does big digital library of primary sources have to do with nineteenth-century American history. It consists of scanned images of the pages in the original books and journals. It is made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project is best viewed with a frames-capable browser. There is one serious limitation to the site. One must have a computer with a high speed processor and also have a reasonably fast modem to make practical use of this excellent collection. Otherwise, it will take too long for the WebPages to load. Also, some page

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images are too large to be viewed on the screen. Fortunately, there is a feature that allows for reducing the size of the image.

#### **4. Finding Secondary Sources on the Internet**

Secondary sources can be classified into at least two categories. One is scholarly materials, usually developed by professionally-trained historians, i.e., persons who have earned at least one graduate degree in history. Many such historians hold the Ph.D. and teach in a college or university. Such persons have skill and experience in making judgments about sources and in using critical thinking to interpret the facts they find in their research. Some amateur historians (i.e., historians without such credentials) have sufficient experience and/or judgment to write excellent scholarly history as well. The other category of secondary sources is popular history. It is usually produced by non-professional historians, such as journalists, novelists, or other writers. Much of the secondary source material one finds on the Internet falls into this category. Usually, someone who is an enthusiast about a given historical subject (the American Civil War, some phase of it, etc.) decides to write about that subject, and then puts that writing on the Internet. Such work is not subject to the criticism of historians, as is the case with much of the secondary source material written by professionally-trained historians and published as books or articles in historical journals.

#### **Conclusion**

We know that Internet is only one source of historical information. Apply the evaluation criteria mentioned above for all resources. From the foregoing, certain points stand out clear. First that the major challenges of historical Research revolve around the problems of sources, character of historical knowledge, objectivity, Explanation, choice of subject, and the peculiar problems of contemporary history. Finally, it must be emphasized that the efficacy of the recommended measures would depend largely on the adoption of the proper attitude by the historian towards his profession. Against all odds, the historian must endeavor to execute his work with professionalism as the paramount consideration. This is the only way history can enhance and sustain its relevance.

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