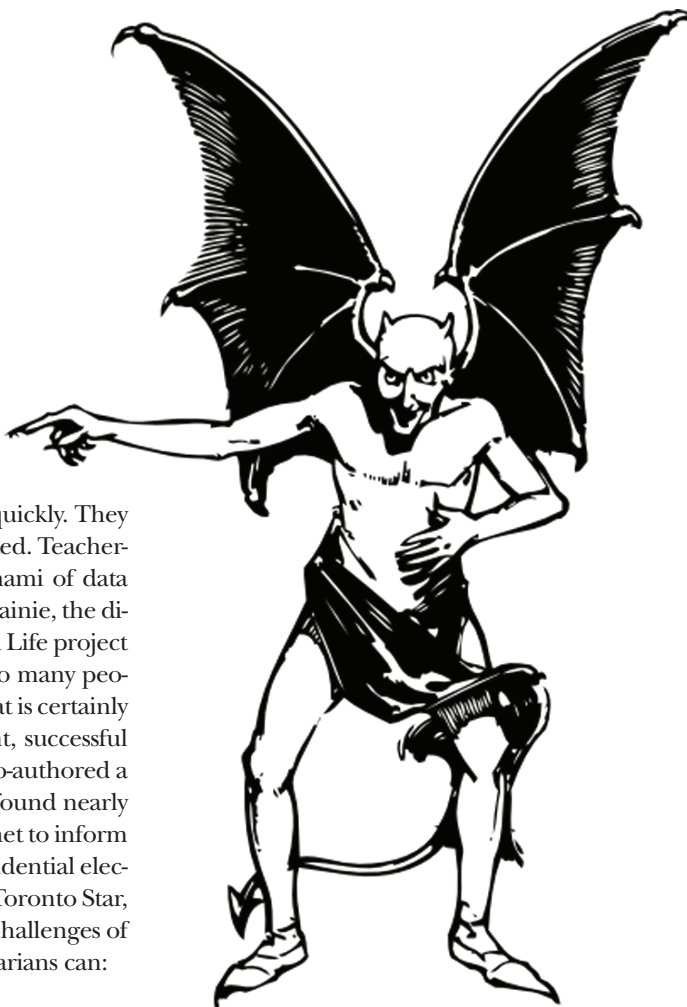


THE TOOLS



Teachers, like their students, want their information quickly. They want to know that their valuable time is not being wasted. Teacher-librarians must show them how to confront the tsunami of data that they and their students face on a daily basis. Lee Rainie, the director of the Pew Foundation's Internet and American Life project confirms that, "In the Internet environment, where so many people are creating their own content, navigating all of that is certainly a newly required literacy. In order to be a competent, successful citizen, you need a new set of tools." Rainie recently co-authored a study that underscores that belief. Her research that found nearly half (46 per cent, in fact) of Americans used the Internet to inform themselves and shape their opinions on the 2008 presidential election. In 2004, it was 31 per cent; in 2000, 16 per cent (Toronto Star, September 13, 2008). To help teachers deal with the challenges of the flood of information on the Internet, teacher-librarians can:

- Show them how Google hits compare to database hits with regard to a subject specific to their practice.
- Show them how to minimize the number of hits on a database search.
- Introduce them to citation helpers, both online and print so they are aware of new formats and they can reinforce the need for academic integrity with their students.
- Collaborate from start to finish. Teachers and teacher-librarians must not abandon each other after the starting gun has been fired; the teachers must inspire the students and reinforce research skills and the teacher-librarian must cheer them all through the home stretch, ready to offer a hand with planning, implementation and evaluation.

Web literacy is only one challenge among many facing educators today. Transformed by the Internet, the school library is no longer the cloistered repository of information. Like the character in the YouTube vignette, we are constantly bemused, frustrated and yet inspired by new technology and innovation. Not only must we be leaders and facilitators in the school community, we must model and apply these new skills as citizens of the twenty-first century. The seminal work loosely referred to in the title of this article alludes to the post-modern predicament in which we as educators find ourselves. If, as Sartre asserted, we must define them ourselves by our actions, it is incumbent upon society to rethink Google, and think. ■

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