Education News And Notes

Using Academic Practices To Improve Your Communications

(NAPSA)—In today's fast-paced world, new content is coming out faster than many people can keep up. According to an article in Science Daily, 90 percent of the world's data has been generated in just the last few years. People actively develop new content every day, whether in their professional roles or when choosing what to blog about, link to on social media, and actively share in some way. With all this increased access to information that can be used to create content, it's important to be mindful of the process and how companies can most effectively connect with consumers or any audience in a way that is accurate and authentic.

The Problem

Without proper authentication, you run the risk of misconstruing or misrepresenting your main idea with potentially false information.

Some Answers

Fortunately, the research community has time-tested best practices that can help anyone develop meaningful content, whether for professional or personal use. To help, Hinrich Eylers, Ph.D., executive dean for the School of Advanced Studies at University of Phoenix, offers these three tips to keep in mind when creating content:

1. Use Solid Sources: Scholars use both primary and secondary sources as they delve into their topic on the quest for the truth. Primary sources include firsthand raw materials such as artifacts, original writings, observed studies and recordings. Secondary sources may include everything from books to blogs on the topic and can help them connect the dots, view the same subject from different viewpoints and gain more perspective. One way to apply the best practice of using multiple sources and going back to the source in our consumption of information is to click through to the original source of an article, blog post or tweet to research it further before drawing conclusions.

2. Think Critically: Scholars are trained to take a highly disciplined analytical approach to what they see and hear. This is known as critical thinking. Through their research and writing, scholars are seasoned critical thinkers, trained in refusing to take things at face value, asking thought-provoking questions and challenging the status quo. As a consumer of information, you benefit

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when you lay the groundwork for arriving at valid conclusions before making up your mind or sharing half-baked perspectives with others. Thinking critically may also help you avoid making false assumptions in everyday decision-making as well.

3. Overcome Bias: Scholars are well aware of the extensive number of cognitive biases that make people susceptible to brain hacking, where someone may not be truly in control of his or her own decision-making and opinions. For instance, "confirmation bias" draws people to information that confirms what they already believe. When people apply biases to the world around them, they're vulnerable to being hacked as individuals, as groups and as a society. To assure they're looking at things objectively rather than subjectively, scholars strive to consider a variety of contexts such as societal, historic, economic, geopolitical and commercial before drawing any conclusions. As you read new content, when you're willing to entertain new theories and embrace new perspectives with an open mind, you increase your chances to learn more and accept the truth at face value.

By keeping these methods in mind, content creators of all backgrounds can be more assured that their content is developed in a way that's all inclusive and accurate, Dr. Eylers added.

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