

Professional Web Surfer Offers Tricks Of The Trade

(NAPSA)—After working as a writer, college English teacher, bookseller, pianist, artist, and editor, Andrea Sandke admits that her career path took a pleasantly unexpected turn when she became a professional Web surfer.

“When a friend suggested that I consider working at Yahoo!, I didn’t know what kind of job there would suit my background,” said Sandke. “But when I visited the surfing department, it just seemed like a perfect place for people with a variety of interests—from artistic to scientific, from the technical world to the world of popular culture. I quickly realized that all the things I was interested in could be applied to making the Search and Directory better.”

Many say it’s the human touch and expertise that differentiates Yahoo! Search from other online search engines, many of which rely strictly on algorithms to pull search results.

As the humanities specialist, Sandke helps oversee the part of the directory that includes history, literature, and philosophy. Like her colleagues in the surfing department, she spends a great deal of time studying people’s searches to help determine how Yahoo! can best present search results and help people find what they are looking for, witnessing first-hand the common mistakes consumers make when researching information online.

The most common pitfalls include selecting search terms that are either too specific or too vague, or entering terms that have dual meanings. For example, when you type in the word “depression,” are



Bookseller turned Yahoo! Surfer Andrea Sandke shares search tips.

you a student or history buff seeking facts about The Great Depression or are you hoping to find mental health information?

This is where the importance of someone such as Sandke comes in with the skill to direct your search so it produces category results for both topics.

Tapping into her previous experience as a bookseller, she offers a simple tip for Internet enthusiasts: Before conducting an online search, imagine that you are going up to the information desk at a bookstore to try to describe the book for which you’re looking.

According to Sandke, one of the most interesting trends she has noticed is that on Sunday nights a lot of people have been typing in phrases like “resignation letters.” Said Sandke: “I just envision these people all over the world, facing another work week, and feeling more than ready to move on and make some dramatic career change for the better.”

Perhaps they too should consider becoming a Yahoo! surfer.

Want to become a better online searcher? Follow these tips from the experts at Yahoo! Search:

Do....

- Check your spelling
- Use quotation marks around your search terms for very specific searches (i.e., “Great Depression”)
- Explore the Yahoo! Directory Category Matches that match your search to find more in-depth results
- Narrow down your results using plus or minus signs (i.e., “rubber+stamps”)
- Look for “links” pages on sites that match your search

Don’t...

- Look only at the big Web sites. Fan sites or non-commercial ones sometimes provide more information than “official” sites
- Forget that the Internet is global. Regional idioms and slang are usually not the best search terms unless you are looking for actual cultural information on that term
- Be overly restrictive or specific on your first search
- Use quotation marks around your search terms for general searches because it will impede your search (i.e., “dogs”)