

NEWSGUARD SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY

Tony Powers
DePaul College Prep

INSTITUTION

DePaul College Prep

CITY

Chicago, IL

LEVEL

Grades 9 - 12

STUDENTS

~725

SOLUTION USED

NewsGuard Browser
Extension

Q&A WITH TONY POWERS, CHIEF LIBRARIAN

How does DePaul College Prep use NewsGuard? Is it integrated into the DePaul curriculum?

I have had the opportunity to talk about media/digital literacy, and in particular, NewsGuard, as I've been invited to speak with classes on the umbrella topic of research skills. Up to this point, I have spoken primarily to English and World History classes at various grade levels, from freshmen to upperclassmen registered in the IB (International Baccalaureate) college-level, program.

When speaking with students on the importance of vetting and analyzing source materials, NewsGuard is mentioned as a service that the DePaul College Prep community has at its disposal to assist with this task. Students, as well as teaching faculty, have access to instructions on how to install and use NewsGuard on their devices through a Library Resources folder available 24/7 on Schoology, the academic content creation/management/sharing platform that the DePaul College Prep community uses.

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What's the most useful aspect of NewsGuard?

With its ease of installation and Red and Green visuals that can't be missed, along with an easy to understand "nutrition label" criteria, NewsGuard provides an easy and gentle way to introduce our high school students to the concept of media literacy. The availability of NewsGuard to our students and faculty is both a practical tool for determining reliable sources of information, but constantly serves as a visual reminder of the importance of vetting sources when members are surfing the web.

Are there certain classes, topics, subjects, which you might argue would find NewsGuard helpful?

My early experience at DePaul College Prep informs me that a digital/media literacy tool like NewsGuard works really well initially in instances, primarily in early level English classes, where students are being asked to write argumentative or opinion pieces and are required to provide supporting material. As students advance in their high school career, and research assignments become more complex, virtually every subject area could benefit from a vetting service such as NewsGuard.

have used NewsGuard effectively in these instances when assisting our IB Math and Biology students in looking for reliable datasets for their Individual Assessment assignments. Not being especially proficient and/or familiar with datasets, NewsGuard has helped me provide these students with reliable data.

With current controversies over what's factual in the areas of science, journalism, government, and current events, amongst others, there is probably not a content area being taught at the secondary school level that NewsGuard wouldn't be of benefit to students. As I mentioned above, even mathematical areas, especially those involving stats and data, can profit from the service.

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In an internet world, what are the primary realities facing students when it comes to learning research skills?

The one aspect of education and the student experience that probably hasn't changed since the "Dark Ages" that you and I experienced has to do with human nature and the "path of least resistance" factor. Many students, as well as their adult counterparts, want concrete answers to their questions in an instant and have been conditioned to expect that in the Internet age. There is no patience for really thinking about where the information we are consuming is coming from. Junk information gets consumed at as rapid a rate as quality information if an algorithm places it at the top of the web page that we are viewing. We have gotten better about reading labels for the nutritional content of the food that we place into our bodies, but haven't quite achieved the same regarding the information we process in our academic, intellectual, and professional lives.

I'm not sure that the kids have changed as much as the amount of information that they have to process and sift through for value. I also think it's interesting that, for a generation that is more prone to question authority than what you and I might have been, there really is not the same challenging attitude toward the information that they consume.