Search Engine Review (Part of the Search Engine Assignment)
ITLS5030/6030: Information Access and Technology

Write a short review (500 words or less) about your (non-Google only) search engine. Describe your search engine (name, URL). What does it do? What makes it special? What are some neat features? What are its strengths, what are its weaknesses?

Healthline (www.healthline.com)

Healthline is a website where people can search for information related to health issues using terminology that is familiar to individuals without a scientific background. Originally founded in 1999 by Dr. James Norman as YourDoctor.com, it became known as Healthline networks in 2005. It provides its own articles that are written and reviewed by doctors. It also provides information from approximately 200,000 sites that are believed to be reliable. Additionally, every fifteen minutes updates to current news are made available. Users can search for information about symptoms, drugs, treatments, healthy living, and locating a doctor. The home page contains links to top health topics and latest health news. There are also interactive health tools, such as videos, as well as a three-dimensional tour of the human body. I think this site could be helpful for someone trying to learn more about a specific health condition. For instance, when I search "brain cancer," the results page shows me links to learn more about brain cancer, specific symptoms, treatments, drugs, drug comparisons, and doctors, as well as learning centers, top healthline results, media (twenty-three videos, five images, and 3D body map), latest news, and other related searches. Although this isn't a replacement for a doctor, an individual could easily learn a lot about a condition of concern. My biggest complaint about this site is that every page feels congested, having too many images and too much advertising. The site could be improved with an advanced search feature that allows delimiters and Boolean and proximity operators. Although there is a link to the help page on the home page and the search pages, the amount of information on the help page is limited. Overall I would recommend this site because of the usefulness and the reliability of the information and the ease of use.

(Sydney James, ITLS 5030, Spring 2012)

Ancestry.com, Inc. is "the world's largest online collection of family history records and resources(**Ancestry.com, Inc., 20112**)." Its search engine http://search.ancestry.com/search/ searches the complex collection of records and resources collected and digitalized by the Ancestry.com, Inc. company since its founding in 1983. This search engine utilizes specific data points which apply to most people (name, birth date, place location) and source specific content to limit resources for a specific search request. The results may then be displayed in a section results table which allows the user to further discriminate between information sources. Full content results are available only by subscription. This search engine has specific delimiters based on date, place and time. These delimiters can be extremely helpful in finding an individual

person, but they can also frustrate users when source information does not match from one document index to another. Also this search engine only indexes materials whose intellectual property rights are owned by Ancestry.com, Inc. This means that other sites may need to obtain content of genealogical interest. The scope of the family history records and resources makes this search engine a good starting point for United States genealogical research.

(Elizabeth Scholes INST 5030, Spring 2012)

GoGooligans

I chose GoGooligans.com as my search engine. It touts itself as an "Advanced Safe Search for Kids and Teens" and an "Educational/Academic Search Engine." They use Google as the background engine for their searches, specifically Google Safe Search and Google Coop (now Google Custom Search) and filter search terms to try and eliminate inappropriate content results. The domain name is registered to Ed Schmidt who is the District Technology Coordinator for the Putnam County School District in Illinois. I originally used Google search to find the site. The results (the second link for me) directed me to an older non-functional version of the site that I thought was the site. The search there was futile. The search box has very large text, probably to help the younger kids using it, but you could not search by pressing enter. You had to click the search button. I found that annoying. When I did a search it yielded no results. Fortunately I clicked on the title/header and the real page came up. They should probably delete the old stuff to avoid confusion. It also appears that there are other similar versions of the site with different addresses and slightly different layouts. More possible confusion. The page has not been updated for a while and I wasn't too fond of the appearance, but there were no annoying ads. Some of the main page links were either dead or led to different sites than indicated. You still cannot search by pressing enter. I liked how there was search suggestions as you typed, but pressing enter, as I am accustom to, selected the first suggestion, even if I didn't want it. I did a few searches and the results seem pretty good. There are a few links that filter the result according to topic (Government, Definition, Facts, etc.) that I liked and did narrow the results. Also, I liked the tab to switch between "Web" and "Image." I tried a search with some inappropriate words and received a pop-up message that the search could not be submitted. That is a nice feature for schools and kids. There was also some advanced search options that were supposed to filter by date, region, different selected sites and more. Unfortunately, when I tried to use the "Advanced Options" I was directed to the non-functional page mentioned earlier, grrrr. After some digging, I ended up using the "Version for Older Kids" to be able to use the advanced search settings. I like that I could easily search for PowerPoint presentations. The date feature did not appear to change the results, bummer. Final analysis is that I would have a hard time recommending the site for more than the savvy user who could deal with the quirks and problems evident. Anything beyond the basic search resulted in frustration and no results. I like the filtering and potential the search engine offers, but as it stands, there are still too many things that break the deal.

(Brad Butcher, ITLS5030, Spring 2013)