

Hate Group Web Site Analysis Essay

Introduction

Since so much information is now available the internet, it is important that you, as a critical thinker, develop an ability to analyze information found in various internet formats. Much information is found on various individual websites. Furthermore, one of the topics of concern for all users of the internet is the rise of hate groups that provide slick, attractive, and enticing web sites to present their message of hate. Because of the rise of hate related web sites this assignment involves you to provide a critical examination of the nature, content, and design of a web site related a particular hate group. The assignment will involve you analyzing material from a single website. Your entire two part essay should be at least 750 words, though longer ones are certainly acceptable.

A Process for this Assignment:

- Read over all these instructions fully.
 - Go to the following web site: The Hate Directory; Hate Groups on the Internet. The URL for this site is <http://www.bcpl.net/~rfrankli/hatedir.htm>. You can then access either the directory. I recommend the 2000 directory even though it requires you to download Adobe Acrobat to view the site.
 - Using the directory as a guide, examine different web sites of different hate groups. This may take some time because such groups often will change their URL when they receive publicity like this directory.
 - After examining several sites select one site to use for a critical analysis and evaluation.
 - Do not do analysis of any website that is primarily links to other sites. I want you to focus on a site that is primarily content orientated rather than links.
 - Use the guidelines provided below to gather effective material from those websites. Select one website you have and use the analysis questions on the web sites to help you analyze the site you have chosen to write about. The material you gather using these two questioning strategies will be used to illustrate your essay. Answer every question that is possible.
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- [Web Site Analysis Guidelines](#)
 - [Thinking Critically about WWW Resources by Esther Grassian, UCLA Libraries](#)
 - [Thinking Critically About Discipline-Based World Wide Web Resources](#)
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- Make a judgment about the website regarding how well it presents the material to the viewer. I am not concerned if you agree with the

material, rather, you should focus on how well the web site is put together. How does the design of the site influence the view into accepting what is presented there.

- Take notes on the various aspects of the site including its content and apparent reliability, its visual impact or lack of it, how the design of the site affects your willingness to accept as reliable information on the site.
- Based on your notes and the material gathered from the website, write a critical essay regarding the nature of the web site. This essay should provide your reader with an internet address, overall description of the site and its goals, as well as your assessment of how well the site serves to attract and keep viewers, how the design of the site makes the content appear credible, as well as any other features of the site that would make it an "interesting" web site. Since the goal of many of these hate groups is to provide a site to draw in viewers and persuade them of their point of view, you want to be able to write an essay that discusses how the website design serves that purpose.
- Begin drafting the essay, with an eye on using the best material to support your thesis. Your thesis is basically an evaluative statement regarding the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the website to achieve the purpose of the site. Your essay will describe the features of the website and show how these features support your evaluative claim about the site. Remember, you are creating an argument that supports your thesis. In a good argument the reader should be persuaded by your reasoning to accept your evaluative thesis about the website. Remember, this essay of yours is not to be just a description of the site, but your evaluation of the site (style and content). The argument that you present is more than a statement of your feelings or beliefs. It is an attempt to persuade the reader that your assessment of the website is on target, is a good assessment of the overall quality of the website. Thus it is your task to persuade the reader through the use of good reasons that your claim is correct.
- The direction you take with your thesis will depend upon your experiences and attitudes about the site. The concrete details you provide will be examples from the internet site you have chosen that support and develop your position on the issue. While writing, be sure to explain how the evidence supports your evaluative thesis. This essay should be no less than 750 words. If you require more material to present to provide a strong and effective argument, please go ahead and add more pages.

Note: Some students have questioned the appropriateness of this assignment. They argue that they should not be required to examine web sites that contain material that they rightly judge to be hurtful, racist, sexist, and otherwise disturbing to them. They argue that the ability to critique a website could be just as easily be done using sites that are not as disturbing. I understand these complaints and the concern that some students have.

However after thinking matters over and doing this assignment for several years now I am not persuaded by their arguments. First of all, we live in a society in which we are confronted with material that is disturbing to us, whether we like it or not. Many times we do not have to option of not viewing the materials. Even though we have the Delete button on our keyboards, sometimes we must examine such sites, if only to protect our children. Thus it is necessary to be able to critique even the disturbing websites and be able to examine to others just how such sites are effective and persuasive. Second, the hate groups that create such websites need the exposure. The internet and the WWW allows such groups to hide the cracks and the back alleys of the information superhighway. It is necessary that we keep the spotlight on such groups. In fact, as you click on certain links you may find that the links are no longer operative. This is in part due to the unwanted publicity and exposure such sites get. Thus we have an obligation to keep the light on such groups. Third, and in my view most importantly, it is a central role of a college education to have students confront disturbing ideas. The search for truth requires that students examine all sorts of ideas, many of which are going to be disturbing, upsetting, and controversial. Yet that is what college is all about, to confront all ideas and put them to the test and decide if they have merit or not. Many ideas so examined will fail to hold up to the tests of critical thinking, while others may stand up to the glare of the light of examination. It is the purpose of college to put you in the situations where you will examine ideas and make critical judgments on them. Your college education should provide you with an experience with thinking through many ideas that many people reject or find troubling. This can include concepts such as evolution, radical Islam, abortion, the possibility of God not existing, expanding social services through governmental activities and regulation, to name but a few. It is the role of teachers to make sure that students have the experience of confronting, thinking clearly through, and assessing such ideas. That, in my view, is what college is all about.