

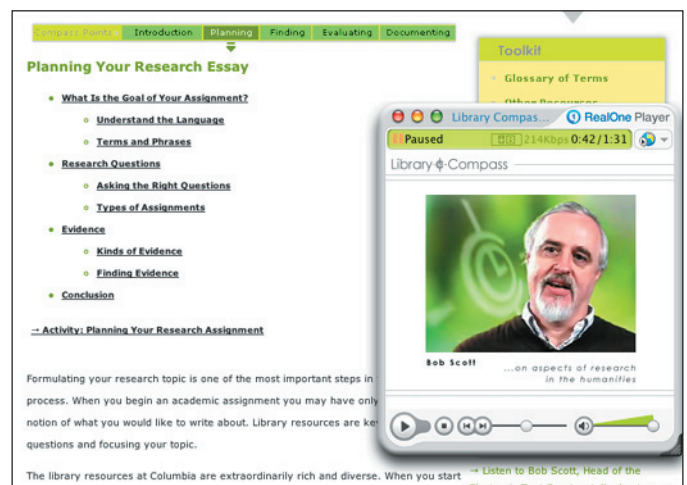
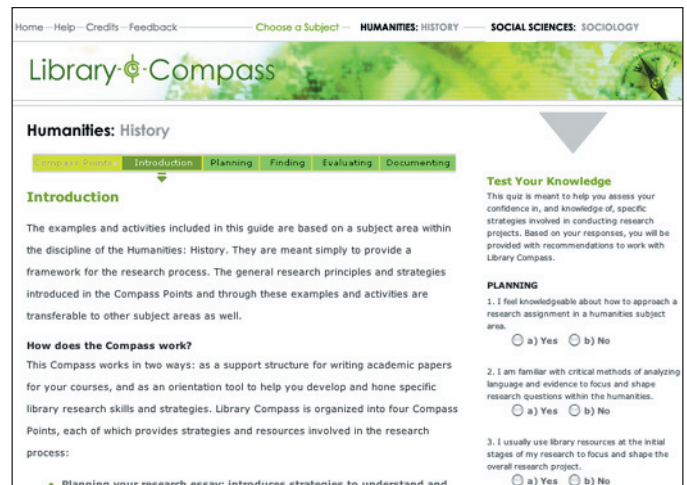
FEATURED PROJECT: LIBRARY COMPASS

Library Compass, a new resource to develop and enhance academic research skills, was developed by the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL) in conjunction with the Columbia University Libraries. It is an online environment that serves as an orientation tool to aid students in honing their research skills for academic scholarship. Through learning activities and detailed explanations, Library Compass supports the writing of academic papers by exposing students to specific library research skills and strategies.

Students may orient their research approach by subject discipline: Humanities or Social Sciences. Library Compass is organized into four compass points, each of which provides strategies and resources involved in the research process: planning, finding, evaluating, and documenting. "Planning Your Research Essay" introduces strategies to understand and develop academic essays and research assignments. This section offers principles and guidelines for formulating research questions and for structuring arguments. To support a search for resources, Compass Point 2, "Finding Resources," offers guidelines for strategic searching and examples of relevant materials. Another issue in academic writing is determining the authority of a source. "Evaluating Resources" explains criteria for judging the quality and credibility of resources. Compass Point 4, "Documenting Your Research," presents guidelines for citing and integrating resources into academic writing. In addition, it explains the principles of intellectual property and the logic behind acknowledging other people's ideas and words, as well as the legal and ethical issues involved in infringing copyright.

These Compass Points intersect throughout the research process. As researchers define topics and arguments, they work with sources to evaluate the quality and validity of their claims. This can also impact the way in which they formulate their questions. Library Compass helps students master each activity, and assists them in recognizing the relationships among activities in order to develop and refine research strategies and skills. At each compass point students are given explanations of research strategies and methods, sources, activities to develop academic essays, and a Toolkit. Although the compass presents research activities in a specific sequence, one can enter it at any point and navigate within it according to specific needs.

Activities and explanations throughout Library Compass are supported by a Toolkit that includes a glossary of terms, additional resources, a link to Columbia LibraryWeb, and to the Ask A Librarian resource page. Interviews with Columbia librarians offer guidance and advice to students new to academic research.



As students and researchers are challenged to find both method and meaning in the midst of an abundance of information, Library Compass points the way to new habits of mind in order to generate questions, locate sources for answers, evaluate the proffered solutions, and formulate responses. Library Compass is another step taken by Columbia University Information Services to respond to a growing need to harness the university's vast knowledge resources.

Faculty and instructors are invited to discuss ways in which this new resource can serve the needs of their specific courses. For more information contact library-compass@columbia.edu.