



## Chapter 1

# Websurfing in the Workplace

*Websurfing* . . . you have probably heard the term and enjoyed time online browsing websites, but what about surfing the web at work? Do you think most employers permit employees to use the Internet for personal reasons at the office? Can workers quickly check websites, personal e-mail, and social networking sites, for example? Might it depend on where they work and what their jobs are?

This chapter explores the topic of personal Internet use during work hours. Many employers are concerned about wasted time, information leakages, and poor work performance due to employees' increased time spent online. Some companies have instituted strict policies about Internet use and monitor websurfing activity of their employees. Workers counter that they are more productive when allowed to work creatively online for a variety of reasons. They say multitasking is now a necessary skill and that they often take work home. Many interesting details emerge as we explore the ways businesses are dealing with this issue.

2 CHOICE AND CONSEQUENCE



## Canvas the Topic

A. What do you already know about personal Internet use at the workplace? Write brief answers to the questions. Then discuss them with your classmates.

1. Have you heard the term *big brother*? What do you think the expression “Big Brother is watching” means when someone is at work?

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2. Have you heard of anyone getting into trouble at work or school for inappropriate use of the Internet? If so, relate the story. What happened? What were the consequences?

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3. Have you ever been asked to read or sign a policy outlining acceptable Internet use at work? If so, what were the most important rules, and what were the consequences if any policies were violated?

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B. Become familiar with key vocabulary related to websurfing in the workplace. Write a brief explanation of each item. Search online. Revise your definitions as you work through this chapter and learn more about the topic.

1. emerging technologies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. a digital trail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. a security breach: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. a letter of reprimand: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. blogging: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. googling: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Reading 1

What is the appropriate level of Internet access for people at the office, and how much personal use should be permitted? Robert Seigel, host of the National Public Radio (NPR) show *All Things Considered*, seeks answers to that question and reports his findings in an interesting broadcast on websurfing at work. Before listening to Seigel's interviews with workers, employers, and experts in the field online at [www.npr.com](http://www.npr.com), read this background article from the NPR webpage that accompanies Seigel's August 2006 report.



Focus In

Discuss the questions. Don't worry if you cannot respond completely. As you read, keep these questions in mind. Take notes, and then revise your answers.

1. The title suggests that surfing the Internet at work can be dangerous. List at least three problems that might arise when employees log on for personal use:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
2. How does blogging differ from news reporting?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think *cyber-slacking* is?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What type of disciplinary action do you think companies take against workers who waste time on the Web at work?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Read

### Wipeout: The Dangers of Workplace Websurfing

Melissa Pachikara

(1) Many employers have developed policies regulating what employees can and can't do online while at work.

(2) In some corner of your mind, you probably know the company is there, watching you. Maybe there's a vague\* memory of being handed an Internet-use policy on your first day of work. But did you actually stop to read it? Perhaps you were too busy clicking "yes" to the many "terms of use" policies you encountered while registering at Web sites . . . at work.

(3) About one-quarter of employee terminations are due to misuse of workplace Internet privileges, according to a recent survey. In a case that gained attention [in 2006], a New York administrative law judge found Internet use no worse than using the phone or reading a newspaper at work.

(4) But companies usually don't share that view. Some firms find employee cyber-slacking cause enough for disciplinary action, and others gear their policies toward warding off\* lawsuits—and financial ruin—stemming from employee e-mails or blogging.

#### Think about It

What might employees be doing with their cell phones at work? Can their phone usage be monitored?

#### Regulating Your Workplace Web Time

(5) Last year, a survey of more than 500 companies found that 61 percent disciplined employees for inappropriate Internet use; one-quarter of them went as far as firing a worker. That's not all that surprising when you consider that three out of five employees admit to personal Websurfing while on the clock, according to another survey of 500 employees conducted [in 2006].

(6) Many firms have set policies regulating what employees can and can't do on company time:

- 84 percent regulate personal e-mail use
- 81 percent regulate personal Web use

**vague:** unclear, indistinct

**warding off:** trying to prevent

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- 42 percent regulate personal IM use
- 23 percent have rules on personal postings to a corporate blog
- 20 percent set policies on personal blogging while at work

### Big Brother Is Watching

(7) In 2005, three-fourths of companies surveyed said they monitored their workers' online connections. And 65 percent of firms said they block employees from accessing certain websites—a 25 percent increase from 2001. But most of the time, these kinds of monitoring should not come as a surprise. A full 89 percent of companies told workers if they were being watched (AMA, 2006).

#### Think about It

Can employers “watch” their workers without telling them? Is it legal? Is it ethical?

### Legal Liability

(8) E-mails may travel from sender to receiver in a flash, but their digital trail lingers much longer—and that has landed some firms in hot water. A 2006 survey of more than 400 companies found that 15 percent have fought a lawsuit triggered by a worker's careless correspondence. One in four firms has had a worker's e-mail subpoenaed,\* and about the same number say they've fired a worker for misusing electronic correspondence.

**subpoenaed:** required to be provided for legal purposes



### Zoom In

Complete the tasks, and answer the questions about the reading.

1. Reread the title. What do you think *wipeout* means here?

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2. Reread the first two paragraphs; the author's use of *you* creates a conversational, casual tone. To whom is she addressing this article?

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3. Reread Paragraph 5. The author reports that well over half of the 500 companies surveyed had disciplined workers for violating Internet use policies.
  - a. How many had fired at least one worker? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What other types of disciplinary action do you think might have been taken against employees inappropriate web use?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Reread Paragraph 6. Employers have many policies regarding online activities.
  - a. Which of the following was **least** regulated at the time of this report (2006)? Circle one:  
email          websurfing          instant messaging          blogging
  - b. Suggest a reason why policies about certain behaviors differ.
  
5. Reread Paragraph 7, which gives examples to support the heading “Big Brother Is Watching.” Fill in the percentages in the blanks.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ monitor workers’ online connections
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ block employee access to certain websites
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ told employees they were being watched
  
6. Reread Paragraph 8. Using the information in the paragraph, define these terms.
  - a. legal liability \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. a digital trail \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. in hot water \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to the story “Surfing the Web on the Company Dime” at [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org). (Put the title in the Search space on the home page.)

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## Citing Sources

The source of a published piece of work is also known as its **citation**. The readings in this text are followed by source citations to remind you that when you use information from them in your own writing, you must cite the original source. Professional and academic writers follow certain guidelines when they cite sources. When assigned to write an essay that includes quotes and/or paraphrases from one or more articles to support your own point of view on the topic, you will need to include both parenthetical references in the body of your paper and a full citation (a list of sources) at the end of your essay. Citing outside sources shows the reader that you have researched the topic and are thus knowledgeable about the subject matter, and that data, ideas, or facts included in an essay have been taken from credible sources. This protects you from committing plagiarism, which means using work from another author or group of writers without giving credit. Citations also show that opinions you have included are from experts in the field, permit you to include relevant material to support your own ideas, and enable readers to do further reading and research by finding the original work for themselves.

There are several formats for citing sources. Which format you will use is generally dictated by the academic discipline. Two of the most common formats are MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association). Using a standard format helps everyone understand the citations. The full citations for this online article are shown here in both APA and MLA formats. Examine each labeled component of the citations. It is very important to learn to write end-of-text references correctly for your assignments.

An APA end-of-text citation is placed on a new page at the end of the paper called *References*. The list of references is ordered alphabetically by authors' last names.

author      date      title of article  
Pachikara, M. (2006). Wipeout: The dangers of workplace websurfing.  
website      URL  
NPR.org. Retrieved from www.npr.org/templates/story  
story.php?storyId=5697883

An MLA end-of-text citation is placed on a new page at the end of the paper called *Works Cited*.

author      title of article in quotes  
Pachikara, Melissa. "Wipeout: The Dangers of Workplace Websurfing."  
website      website host      up-      access  
date      medium      date  
NPR.org. 2006. National Public Radio, 2006. Web. 5 July 2009.

## Sorting Sources

When you read widely on a controversial topic, you will find that some texts are more objective than others. Authors who are objective try hard to report facts and a variety of perspectives on an issue, but they remain neutral themselves. Other writers express their opinions; they choose material carefully to support their views and hope to persuade readers to agree with them. Either way, you should keep notes on what you read in order to use material appropriately in your own writing.

When reading and analyzing information from a variety of sources, ask yourself questions about the authors' views. What are the main points, and how are they supported? Are there mostly facts or opinions? Who agrees with whom and why? Who presents an opposing viewpoint and why? Whose arguments are the most sound? A reading log can help you take note of this kind of information and prepare for a research-based essay. The companion website for this textbook contains a Sorting Sources Chart you can use to log information about each reading. Save the file, and add to it after each reading.



## Connect

Go to the companion website to do the practice exercises. Then complete the Sorting Sources chart for this reading. Remember to save your file and add to it as you complete the chapter. A sample chart for Chapter 1 appears on the book's companion website.

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## Reading 2

In the *All Things Considered* broadcast, you heard Robert Seigel interview several people about acceptable Internet policies at their jobs. One important interviewee, Nancy Flynn, is the executive director of the E-Policy Institute and a major contributor to the report on pages 11–13 published by the American Management Association (AMA) in 2006. The data gathered from the AMA survey is reported in percentages rather than numbers of respondents, making this information fairly easy to understand. Since Nancy Flynn is an expert in the field, note how the author uses Flynn’s interpretations of the results throughout the report.



### Focus In

As you read the AMA report, use two different colors of markers or highlighters to complete the activities.

- a. Use one color to highlight or underline each reference to Flynn and her work. Some citations will be direct quotes and easy to spot because they are in quotation marks.
- b. Use a second color to highlight or circle phrases the writer uses to reference, or cite, statistics in the report. An example is “According to the AMA/ePolicy Institute Survey. . . .”

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## Read

### 2006 Workplace E-Mail, Instant Messaging, and Blog Survey: Bosses Battle Risk by Firing E-Mail, IM, and Blog Violators

*American Management Association*

(1) **New York, July 11, 2006**—E-mail mismanagement continues to take a hefty\* toll on U.S. employers, with costly lawsuits—and employee terminations—topping the list of electronic risks. As recent court cases demonstrate, e-mail can sink businesses—legally and financially. Last year, the inability to produce subpoenaed e-mail resulted in million dollar—even billion dollar—lawsuits against U.S. companies. In fact, 24% of organizations have had employee e-mail subpoenaed, and 15% of companies have gone to court to battle lawsuits triggered by employee e-mail. That’s according to the 2006 Workplace E-Mail, Instant Messaging & Blog Survey from American Management Association (AMA) and The ePolicy Institute (AMA, 2006).

(2) Increasingly, employers are fighting back by firing workers who violate computer privileges. Fully 26% of employers have terminated employees for e-mail misuse. Another 2% have dismissed workers for inappropriate instant messenger (IM) chat. And nearly 2% have fired workers for offensive blog content—including posts on employees’ personal home-based blogs.

(3) Employee bloggers, who can be fired, or “dooced” in blog parlance,\* for blogging at work (and at home on their own computers) face increasing risk of termination by employers struggling to keep a lid on\* legal claims, regulatory fines, and security breaches.\* With the blogosphere growing at the rate of one new blog per second, industry experts expect the ranks of dooced employee bloggers to swell.

(4) Employee bloggers mistakenly believe the First Amendment gives them the right to say whatever they want on their personal blogs. Wrong! The First Amendment only restricts government control of speech; it does not protect jobs. Bloggers who work for private employers in employment-at-will states can be fired for just about any reason—including blogging at home on

#### Think about It

What important freedoms does the First Amendment provide in the U.S.? Do these freedoms include differences between spoken words and written words on the Internet?

**hefty:** heavy, significant

**parlance:** a particular way of speaking or using words

**keep a lid on:** keep quiet or secret; decrease, curb

**security breaches:** leaks of confidential information outside the company

their own time or at the office during work hours,” said Nancy Flynn, author of the newly released book *Blog Rules* (AMACOM, July 2006) and executive director of The ePolicy Institute. In spite of the confusion, fewer than 2% of organizations have educated employee bloggers about the First Amendment and privacy rights.

(5) Employers eager to minimize electronic risks and maximize employee compliance\* should start with written rules and policies, said Flynn. Fully 76% of organizations have e-mail usage and content policies, with another 68% using policy to control personal e-mail. Unfortunately, employers do a less effective job of managing electronic business records, the evidence that can make (or break) a company’s legal position. According to the survey, 34% of companies have written e-mail retention/deletion policies in place, in spite of the fact that 34% of employees don’t know the difference between business-critical e-mail that must be saved and insignificant messages that may be purged.

(6) While 35% of employees use IM at work, only 31% of organizations have IM policy in place, and 13% retain IM business records. With 50% of workplace users downloading free IM tools from the Internet—a dangerous practice that 26% of employers aren’t even aware of—the lack of written IM rules opens organizations to tremendous risk. Employees’ use of public IM tools coupled with ill-advised content including attachments (26%); jokes, gossip, rumors and disparaging remarks (24%); confidential company, employee, and client information (12%); and sexual, romantic and pornographic chat (10%)—make workplace IM a recipe for legal, regulatory and security disaster.

(7) When it comes to potential risks, unmanaged blogging dwarfs\* e-mail and IM. Among the blog risks detailed in Flynn’s new book *Blog Rules* are copyright infringement, invasion of privacy, defamation,\* sexual harassment and other legal claims; trade secret theft, financial disclosures, and other security breaches; blog mob attacks and other PR nightmares; productivity drains; and mismanagement of electronic business records.

(8) According to the AMA/ePolicy Institute Survey, 8% of organizations operate business blogs. In spite of the risks, only 9% have policy governing the operation of personal blogs on company time; 7% have policy governing employees’ business blog use and content; 7% have rules governing the content employees may post on their personal home-based blogs; 6% use policy to control personal postings on corporate blogs; 5% have strict anti blog

**compliance:** obedience, adherence to rules

**dwarfs:** is larger than

**defamation:** lying that causes damage to an individual’s or company’s reputations

policies banning blog use on company time; and merely 3% have blog record retention policies in place.

(9) “With 55% of business blogs ‘facing out’ for customers and other third parties to read, the lack of written blog rules is a potentially costly oversight,” said Flynn. “Considering that less than 2% of organizations assign a lawyer or other responsible party to review employees’ entries and third parties’ comments prior to posting, the enforcement of written usage and content rules is a business-critical best practice for any organization engaged in blogging.”

(10) In addition to policy, employers are advised to take advantage of technology tools to help manage employees’ blog use (and misuse). Seventeen percent of companies use technology to block employee access to external blog URLs, and another 12% regularly monitor the blogosphere to see what is being written about them. As revealed by the 2005 Electronic Monitoring & Surveillance Survey from American Management Association and The ePolicy Institute, blog monitoring and blocking lag behind Internet and e-mail surveillance. Fully 76% of employers monitor employees’ Website connections; 65% use technology to block connections to banned Websites; and 55% monitor e-mail.

#### Think about It

What examples of technology (software) were given in the radio broadcast from *All Things Considered*?

#### References

- American Management Association (AMA) and ePolicy Institute. (2006, July 11). *2006 Workplace E-Mail, Instant Messaging & Blog Survey: Bosses Battle Risk by Firing E-Mail, IM & Blog Violators* [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://press.amanet.org/press-releases/28/2006-workplace-e-mail-instant-messaging-blog-survey-bosses-battle-risk-by-firing-e-mail-im-blog-violators/>
- Flynn, N. (2006). *Blog rules: A business guide to managing policy, public relations, and legal issues*. New York: AMACOM.

#### Source Citation

Study how the reading’s first reference would look in APA and MLA formats.

2006 Workplace e-mail, instant messaging & blog survey: Bosses battle risk by firing e-mail, IM, and blog violators. (2006). *American Management Association*. Retrieved from [http://www.amanet.org/press/amanews/2006/blogs\\_2006.htm](http://www.amanet.org/press/amanews/2006/blogs_2006.htm)

MLA

“2006 Workplace E-Mail, Instant Messaging & Blog Survey: Bosses Battle Risk by Firing E-Mail, IM, and Blog Violators.” *American Management Association*. AMA, 2006. Web. 5 Jan 2010.



## Zoom In

Write T if the statement is true or F if it is false. Correct false statements so that they are true.

1. \_\_\_\_ This article is directed toward employers rather than employees. (Hint: Look at the publisher in the citations.)
2. \_\_\_\_ The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects employees from being fired for posts on personal blogs.
3. \_\_\_\_ Nancy Flynn recommends that employers create written rules and policies to reduce electronic risks.
4. \_\_\_\_ According to the author, IM poses greater risks for companies than blogs.
5. \_\_\_\_ Most employers govern business blog use.
6. \_\_\_\_ Most employers monitor employee website connection in the workplace.



## Vocabulary Check: Word Choice

Reread the report. List phrases from the reading with similar meanings to those listed. The paragraph number is to the left; the number of words in the phrase is in parentheses. (Note: A hyphenated word like *ill-advised* is considered one word.)

Par. 1: create significant and costly problems for (5): take a hefty toll on

caused by (2): triggered by

Par. 2: abuse their rights to use computers (3): \_\_\_\_\_

Par. 3: the special language of bloggers (2): \_\_\_\_\_

keep quiet and/or decrease (4): \_\_\_\_\_

numbers of workers fired due to blogging to increase (7): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Par. 4: companies in states where working is seen as voluntary and workers can legally be fired for almost any reason (5): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 5: get more employees to follow rules/regulations (3): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- rules stating which messages must be saved or can be deleted (6): \_\_\_\_\_  
unimportant emails that employees can delete (6): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 6: in addition to inappropriate subject matter (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 7: blogging that is not monitored is a bigger problem than e-mail (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
reproducing material without crediting the original author (2): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- breakdowns in protection of information (2): \_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 8: only (1): \_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 9: mistake that could have long-ranging, expensive consequences (3): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 9: check content of employees' blogs and responses from outsiders before they are made public online (10): \_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 9: an activity that is necessary for companies to stay competitive and get ahead (4): \_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 10: to prevent workers from accessing blog sites that are not hosted online by the company (7): \_\_\_\_\_
- Par. 10: employers monitor and filter email and Internet use in general but pay little attention to blogging (10): \_\_\_\_\_

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## Connect

Go to the companion website to do the practice exercises. Then complete the online Sorting Sources chart for this reading. Remember to save your file and add to it as you complete the chapter.



## Zoom In

To synthesize (combine several ideas into one) written information about a topic, the first step is to read information from several sources and summarize the main ideas. In addition to summarizing, a very important part of synthesizing is to recognize how ideas from different writers are related. For instance, does an argument presented by one author agree with that of another? Does the second author present further evidence to support the argument of the first? Or by contrast, does one writer argue an opposing viewpoint in response to another's article?

Read actively and critically. Keep in mind that each writer has a purpose for presenting information in a particular way. Ask yourself questions as you read, such as, “Why is this expert quoted here?” “What do these examples show?” and “How is this claim supported?” Mark up the text: Underline, circle, highlight, number, or star—whatever will show that something is important to you. Write notes and question marks in the margins. Physically engaging with the text helps you focus mentally. You will better understand and remember what you read. Marking the text helps you return to important areas later.

When you read about a topic that is new for you, the first few texts that you read may seem hard. That's okay. Keep reading! As you become more familiar with the subject matter and vocabulary associated with it, reading becomes easier. Not only will you understand what others say, but you will start to form your own opinions on the topic. List them. These ideas—your own insights—will evolve into thesis statements, topic sentences, and major points in your essays. Support for your ideas will come from synthesizing the work of others.

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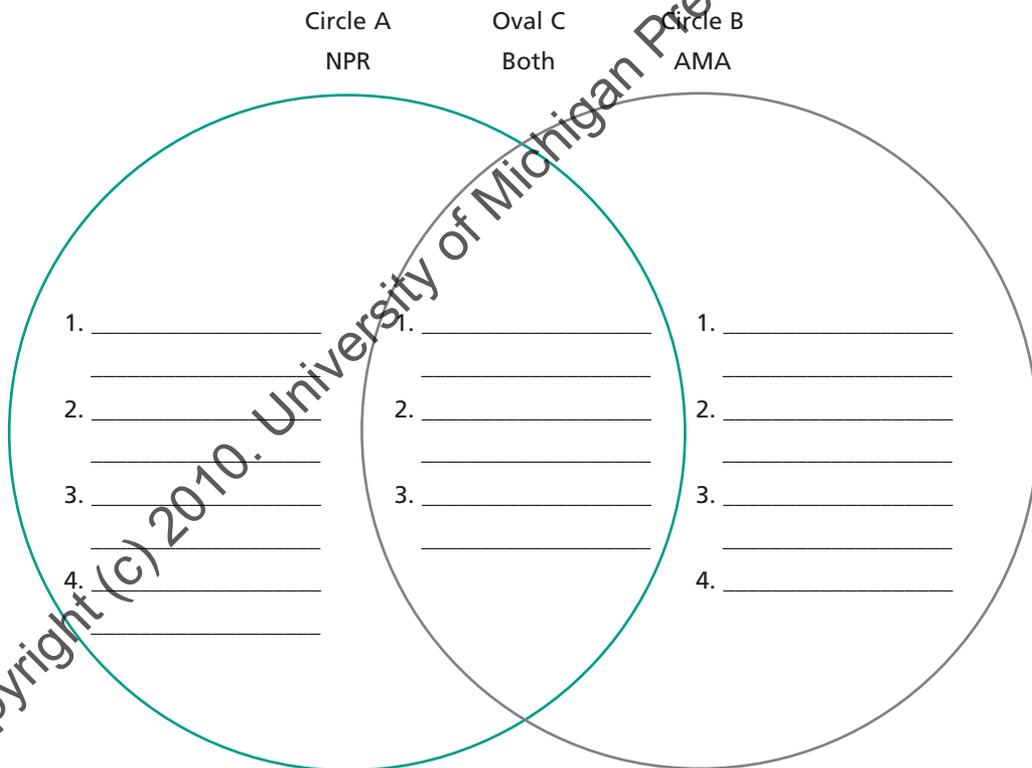
### Synthesizing

This graphic is called a Venn Diagram, which is often used to organize information from two sources in a graphic, or visual, way. Use the Venn diagram to help you synthesize some of the main points you have learned so far on the topic of this chapter, websurfing at work.

In Circle A, list four pieces of unique information from the NPR *All Things Considered* report and interviews.

In Circle B, list four pieces of unique information from the AMA and ePolicy Institute report.

In Oval C, the overlapping area in the middle, list three pieces of information contained in both articles.



## Reading Critically: Purpose, Tone, Bias

### Purpose

An author's cause or reason for writing is also known as **purpose**. When reading, it is important to consider the purpose of an article. All authors have opinions, feelings, and thoughts that influence what they write. A reader can better evaluate the information presented by identifying the author's purpose. Authors may have more than one purpose. Some common purposes are to inform (educate or explain), to persuade (convince or argue), and to entertain (narrate or describe). Another important factor that influences the purpose is the intended audience. As you are reading, ask yourself for whom the author has written and why.

**TIP** The publication or source often influences the author's purpose.

### Tone

The **tone** of an article is similar to the tone of voice used when speaking. The tone often reveals the author's attitudes or feelings about a topic such as anger, disgust, compassion, optimism, or admiration. A reader can usually pick up clues about the tone from the author's choice of words and details. The tone is often related to the purpose. For example, if the purpose is to inform, then the tone may be objective or matter of fact. If the purpose is to entertain, then the tone may be humorous or informal. If the purpose is to persuade, the tone may be serious, critical, or cynical.

After asking if the reader has read the Internet-use policy, Melissa Pachikara, the author of "Wipeout," states in a light-hearted tone, "Perhaps you were too busy clicking "yes" to the many "terms of use" policies you encountered while registering at websites . . . at work." (Par. 2)

Then, her tone becomes more serious when she follows with, "About one-quarter of employee terminations are due to misuse of workplace Internet privileges, according to a recent survey." (Par. 2)

**TIP** The tone of an article reveals emotion just like the tone of voice of a speaker.

### Bias

When reading critically, it is also important to consider the possible bias of the author in order to evaluate the objectivity of the information. If the information is not reasonably objective, the reader should be able to recognize the point of view or bias. **Bias** involves preconceived opinions or judgments about a person, group, or idea. Both writers and readers have existing opinions. Critical readers need to recognize an author's bias or point of view as well as their own. For example, if reading an article about President Obama's achievements, you might want to ask if the article was written by a Republican or a Democrat. Your own political views will likewise affect how you evaluate the article and its message.

**TIP** The thesis statement provides clues as to the author's bias.