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# **Fear and Loathing in the Information Age**

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- research on and evaluation of interactive distance learning environments that inform our understanding of student learning; and
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# Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

## **Abstract**

Anthony Giddens (e.g., 1977, 1990) has argued that the society in which we live is increasingly the result of our own actions, both individually and collectively, a condition he refers to as social reflexivity. He counters the common assumption that as we acquire more and more knowledge of the world and build structures of society we will gain control over our lives. Quite the contrary, we “manufacture” uncertainties that give us more choices, diverse possibilities, less clarity about an appropriate action. Modern technologies such as the World Wide Web have contributed greatly to social reflexivity and I argue here that traditional models of education, emphasizing as they do inductive and deductive processes are inadequate to the modern technological context. Using examples from research on students using the WWW, I propose that abductive reasoning is a more powerful mode for navigating the uncertainties of the Information Age and promoting a semiotic reflexivity.

## Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

The other day I received in the mail an offer for a free book “How to do Everything Right” if I would only subscribe to a newsletter that provided such advice on a monthly basis. Wouldn’t it be great if there really was such a book? At last we would have a resource that told us which long distance telephone calling plan was best for us. We would know exactly how to replace the wax seal on the bottom of our toilet. Where to sit on an airplane to maximize our survivability in the event of a crash. How to comfort a grieving friend. What stocks to buy and when to sell them. When to seek a second opinion on a medical diagnosis. What to eat and what not to eat. Where to find the best deal on a new car. Wouldn’t that be great?

I didn’t order the book, although I must admit I was tempted. The prospect of getting everything right seems to lie behind a lot of popular books, magazines and television shows these days, and I confess that I am a frequent consumer. I am the owner of books on how to invest wisely, plan for my retirement, stay healthy, lose weight (several of those), get great travel bargains and so on. No doubt the reason that I received the offer for “How to Do Everything Right” is that my name had been provided by another company who publishes a similar product to which I already subscribe! So why didn’t I succumb this time?

Perhaps it was due to the fact that by following the advice of the books I already own, I have recently lost a hell of a lot of my net worth, gained weight and made a real mess of replacing that wax seal! Perhaps it was because the advice changes so quickly or that equally credible sources disagree so strongly about what is “right.” I remember wondering if I could write a book on “How to Get Everything Right in Teaching and Learning.” A number of years ago the U.S. Department of Education published a book called “What Works” and there have been numerous compendia of “best practices” in teaching and learning in recent years. I have studied learning and instruction for most of my professional life and am regarded as something of an expert on the topic. I ought to have some things to say about what teaching practices are associated with effective learning. I am often questioned by my students and by in-service teachers as to what is the best way to do something: teach a child to read, manage classroom behavior, sequence mathematical concepts, lead a discussion, etc. When I give my standard answer “It depends on a lot of factors,” they roll their eyes and look knowingly at one another. I’m supposed to have those answers, to know how to do the right thing. That’s why I get the big bucks.

The drive to get things right is fed by the assumption that there IS a right way and that as we accumulate more and more knowledge, we will move closer to certainty about our actions. Moreover, if there is a right way, then any action that is less than completely successful is, by definition, wrong. I suspect we are driven as much by the fear and loathing of getting it wrong as we are by the desire of getting it right. We in the field of educational research

## Cunningham: Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

have fed this fear by assuring teachers and learners that the path to getting it right (i.e., teaching or learning effectively) lies in the results of systematic, controlled research that pinpoints causal variables and eliminates extraneous ones. This research then leads to principles of learning and instruction that provide reliable methods, the right way to do things. It is certainly true that we know more about teaching and learning now than we ever have and it only stands to reason we must be getting closer to the truth of the matter. Increased knowledge leads to reduced uncertainty and better prospects for prediction and control of teaching and learning.

Following the British sociologist Anthony Giddens (e.g., 1979, 1990), I will argue just the opposite; that is, increasing knowledge leads to greater uncertainty rather than less, to divergence rather than convergence, to more choices rather than fewer. As Giddens (1990, p. 39) puts it, “We are abroad in a world that is thoroughly constituted through reflexively applied knowledge, but where at the same time we can never be sure that any given element of that knowledge will not be revised.” Giddens has coined the term “manufactured uncertainty” to characterize those risks, dangers and unknowns that come from our actions and creations rather from the natural world. In an earlier age, our uncertainty stemmed primarily from forces beyond our control (weather, cycles of light and darkness, availability of food, threats from predators and other people) but as we created institutions and patterns of action to gain some control over these factors, we have created new uncertainties. Agriculture certainly mitigated some of the problems of a consistent supply of food, but raised new uncertainties about the ownership of land, erosion, the effects of fertilizers and pesticides, etc. Technologies such as the telephone and the Internet have allowed us to eliminate the constraints of distance on communication, but have multiplied the potential for harm as well as good.

In other words, changes have produced both progress and new worries. Has anyone else noticed how dangerous the world has become? Back in my day (yes, I have reached the age where I can use that expression), going outside was seen as something you did for your health. Now the outdoors is a place to be feared: We mustn't expose our skin to the sun because UV rays cause cancer. We can't walk in the woods because we might pick up Lyme disease. Allergens are everywhere and you are better off in your home breathing HEPA-filtered air. The Weather Channel is constantly warning us to take cover and be alert when “conditions are right for severe weather” whether or not there actually is any severe weather around. Pollutants in the air could damage our lungs. Perhaps we should put a health warning on our front door that we can view every time we exit the house. But of course, staying inside may be even worse: dust mites, Legionnaire's disease, carbon monoxide poisoning, pollutants in your water supply, a sedentary lifestyle, etc.

We are awash in information and modern technologies have provided us unprecedented access to it. Rather than reducing uncertainty, this knowledge has multiplied our options and opportunities making it all the more difficult to know what to do, what is right. To further compound the matter, every new structure creates new choices and new contexts such that what seemed right a few years ago no longer does. Traditions of deferring decisions to authority figures like parents and experts seem to be dissolving. Whereas a decision to marry or have children might

previously have been strongly influenced by one's parents or peers, now people can connect with a much larger domain of relevant information. We can draw upon the resources available on television, in books, on the Internet to make decisions about our lives and conversely can influence people throughout the world with whom we are in contact, directly or by example.

Giddens refers to this connectivity as "social reflexivity" and claims that it is increasing exponentially. Social reflexivity comes about because the conditions in which we live are increasingly the result of our own actions, both individually and collectively. And it is sustained and promoted precisely because we are increasingly oriented toward engaging and challenging the uncertainties and opportunities we create. Our social behavior is not merely limited by these connections, we also bear responsibility for creating, sustaining or ignoring them. Buying a pair of Nike shoes is much more than an act of covering one's feet. It touches upon issues of worker exploitation, free trade, peer approval, corporate sustainability, expendable income, shoe technology, advertising and so on and so forth. A simple act like turning on a light switch has ramifications far beyond increasing the illumination in a room - just ask the people of California. Today, all of our actions and most of what we used to think of as the "natural" world are infused with the influence of human interventions. Eco (1984, pg. 10) put the matter this way:

"To walk, to make love, to sleep, to refrain from doing something, to give food to someone else, to eat roast beef on Friday--each is either a physical event or the absence of a physical event, or a relation between two or more physical events. However, each becomes an example of good, bad, or neutral behavior within a given philosophical framework."

Technology, broadly conceived, has played a major role in this movement to higher and higher levels of social reflexivity in our society. Our extent of connection and influence are multiplied many-fold by modern communication technologies, for both good and ill. In a very real sense our society is global rather than local. It is as easy for me to stay in touch with my students in Malaysia, Iceland and Cypress, as it is my students in Pennsylvania, Iowa or down the hall in the School of Education building at Indiana University. Additionally, technologies have markedly changed the very nature of our interactions. Cellular telephones allow anytime, anywhere synchronous communication (does anyone else remember when telephone calls were private affairs usually performed at home, the office, or in enclosures called telephone booths?) Wireless personal digital assistants and laptop computers have enhanced our connectivity to a vast amount of information and access to tools for managing our lives. Televisions are ubiquitous - Oprah is everywhere! With this added connectivity comes the ability to influence and be influenced, to be empowered and to be manipulated.

## Cunningham: Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

But as we all know, more is not necessarily better. Anyone who has spent any time at all surfing the Net is well aware of how much crap (is this a technical term?) there is. Whereas we could previously assume some form of authorization of the information found in traditional resources (e.g., textbooks and scholarly books from reputable publishers, peer-reviewed journal articles, pronouncements from credentialed experts), anyone with an Internet connection and an axe to grind can put up a Website or join a chat room on the World Wide Web (WWW). And even in the case of the resources we previously regarded as authoritative, now we are able to review the sources of information upon which they drew to arrive at their conclusions or seek out alternative viewpoints and make our own judgments. Nearly everyone I talk to lately has a story about how they were able to find information on the Internet that called into question some advice they had received from an expert. In one case, the husband of a friend was several hours away from by-pass surgery when she discovered a reliable Website that indicated his symptoms were also associated with sleep apnea, which was subsequently diagnosed and treated successfully.

As social reflexivity increases, so too does the need for a personal reflexivity, here referred to as semiotic consciousness. More and more we find ourselves in situations where tradition and authority have lost their hold and no longer assure us that we are doing the right thing. We are increasingly faced with the opportunity and the anxiety of making our own choices. Giddens characterizes this as a kind of democratization, where decisions and choices are made not on the basis of tradition, convention or sanction, but rather through negotiation and discussion. A decision to marry or have children is the result of a negotiation between partners taking into consideration as much relevant information and deliberation as they wish. The range of options is so much wider than before. When I was growing up, unmarried cohabitation was considered "living in sin," now it is commonplace. Married couples with no children were called "childless," now they are DINKS (double income no kids). Thus the argument is that life is becoming more democratic in part because traditions of authority and sanction are breaking down and we are becoming increasingly responsible for our own choices about what is right. With choice comes the possibility, indeed the inevitability, of diversity, disagreement, even open conflict. More than ever before we need to articulate the reasons for our choices and be able to justify them in the arena of life, all the while respecting the rights of others to make different choices for different reasons. Not surprisingly, I believe that education has an important role to play in raising semiotic consciousness in this world of high social reflexivity.

I am reminded of Peirce's (1877) four methods of resolving doubt. Peirce talked about the "fixation of belief" as the process by which we establish our worldview of beliefs. Beliefs are our stability but they never are sufficient. They can and *do* change. Peirce proposed that we create or accept new beliefs when we are in a condition of inadequacy that he called genuine doubt (to distinguish this form of skepticism from the methodological form used by Descartes). Genuine doubt arises from experience, hence it is naturally embedded in a relevant context or situation. Being in a state of genuine doubt is unpleasant - the world no longer makes obvious sense - so it is necessary to create or alter beliefs so as to move to, or fix, some new state of belief.

Peirce proposed four methods of fixing beliefs: tenacity, authority, *a priori* and experiment. Briefly, tenacity is invoked whenever one holds onto beliefs in the face of doubt in order to preserve a self-identity or a worldview to which one is committed. The specter of a dogmatist is, of course, raised, but on the positive side, no competing set of beliefs is ever without its own doubtful features so the choice of beliefs will always involve a matter of commitment. We use the method of authority to fix beliefs when we accept the beliefs of authority figures like parents, experts or members of a community with whom we want to identify. Nowhere is the method of authority more widely used than in the field of education. The *a priori* method is invoked when our beliefs change in the context of an already-existing structure of beliefs, such as philosophical, scientific or cultural preferences or ideals. Here we resolve our doubt by seeking a conceptual coherence, a commitment to the worldview that has served us well so far. The three methods described so far all resolve doubt by opinion, stubbornly maintained, taken from others, or reasoned from premises. The fourth method, which Peirce preferred, is the method of experiment, where one seeks to remove doubt by collecting more and more observations, generating potential hypotheses to account for the surprising experience, and reaching a conclusion based upon an inferential process.

It is clear, to me at least, that increasing social reflexivity is increasing the need for the use of the method of experiment to resolve doubt. Experiment entails skepticism, openness to alternatives, discernment, negotiation, cooperation, and compromise to fix beliefs. Are these skills systematically provided for our educational system? In education we have greatly increased the amount of personal autonomy allowed and expected of both students and teachers. In the current climate of learner-centered teaching and open access to information resources and tools undreamed of only a few years ago, students are being called upon to make choices and exercise skills as never before. What are these skills and are we providing students (and teachers) the opportunities to master them?

I think we are only beginning to understand some of the new skills of learning. One skill that I anticipate will play an increasing role is abductive reasoning. As you might remember, Peirce proposed three interdependent modes of inference: abduction, induction and deduction:

Deduction is the only necessary reasoning. It is the reasoning of mathematics. It starts from a hypothesis, the truth or falsity of which has nothing to do with the reasoning; and of course its conclusions are equally ideal. The ordinary use of the doctrine of chances is necessary reasoning, although it is reasoning concerning probabilities. Induction is the experimental testing of a theory. The justification of it is that, although the conclusion at any stage of the investigation may be more or less erroneous, yet the further application of the same method must correct the error. The only thing that induction accomplishes is to determine the value of a quantity. It sets out with a theory and measures the degree of concordance of that theory with fact. It can never originate any idea whatsoever. No more can deduction. All the ideas of science come to it by way of Abduction. Abduction consists in studying facts and devising a theory to explain them. Its only justification is that if we are ever to understand things at all, it must be in that way. (5.145)

## Cunningham: Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

Induction and deduction have served us well in traditional instruction. Students are basically told what they need to know and encouraged to try out their knowledge in the world of their experience or on tasks that we contrive. Certainly those are important skills and need to be nurtured but are they enough in these times of increasing social reflexivity? Are they adequate to meet the needs of the Information Age? In my opinion, abductive reasoning is key. Consider, for example, the WWW. Although teachers can certainly use the WWW to house documents and tasks that students are supposed to learn from, more often the WWW is used as a resource that students use to learn with. Elsewhere (Cunningham, 1998, pg. 834-835) I have argued that on the WWW:

“we are driven by genuine doubt, curiosity and playfulness to surf the net, to explore the many communities of discourse and practice found there. We are embodying a process of inquiry and modes of reasoning described many years ago by Peirce, but only now recognized as unique and ubiquitous. The learner is an information seeker, not the end point of a communicative act. As we move through the Information Age and are continually being inundated by increasing volumes of information and patterns of potential significance, the need for reasoning skills, information seeking, and conceptual navigation is ever more evident. Mastering a subject matter becomes the exception rather than the rule. Clear communication about a domain of knowledge or set of skills in anticipation of future application becomes less important than connecting with resources as they are needed to solve a contemporaneous problem. The dominant metaphor of education as efficient communication or knowledge consumption must change to that of the hunter-gatherer.”

Gary Shank and I (Shank & Cunningham, 1996; see also Cunningham, 1998) have recently elaborated Peirce’s types of reasoning by identifying 6 modes of abduction, three of induction and one of deduction. The derivation is too complex to go into detail here, but the six modes of abduction can be described briefly as follows with respect to some research by Arici, Schreiber and Cunningham (1998). In this work we observed and had students think aloud as they used the WWW to answer questions like, “Where is the best city to live?” or “What can be done about the school dropout problem?”

**1. Hunch.** This type of abductive inference deals with a kind of intuition that searching in a particular site or for a particular key word might lead to other links or directly to resources. We observed students linking to sites because they hoped to find leads to more relevant sites. One student thought that the topic of dropouts might come up in a sociology class and searched for a relevant Web-based class at Indiana University.

**2. Symptom.** A symptom is a sign whose action is ongoing in the present and we infer from the symptom the presence of some more general phenomenon. For instance, our Web surfer must decide if an item of information is relevant to her search parameters, whether it is worth following. Is a link about truancy likely to be relevant to the problem of school dropouts?

**3. Metaphor/Analogy.** This type of abductive inference deals with the deliberate manipulation of resemblance, particularly metaphor or analogy, to create or discover possible relevant information. For example, suppose our Web surfer is having little success locating information about school dropouts. If she regards the problem as similar to that of runaways, she might be able to move forward by following this related theme.

**4. Clue.** A clue is a sign that suggests some past state of affairs that has led to the clue. Statistics are often clues. For instance, is the increase in teen pregnancies a clue to the cause of school dropouts? What past state of affairs (e.g., poor communication in the family) might have led to this result?

**5. Diagnosis/Scenario.** This type of abductive inference involves the formation of a possible rule based on available evidence, proposing plausible hypotheses or scenarios from the body of clues. Our Web surfer is now moving toward tentative accounts of the cause of dropouts, and is attempting to unite these accounts in a more unified form like a narrative or scenario.

**6. Explanation.** This type of inference deals with a possible formal rule, reasoning in order to form a general plausible explanation. This form of abduction seems closest to what Josephson and Josephson (1995) call "reasoning to the best explanation." So if our Web surfer, based upon the available information, has proposed an explanation for school dropouts that is consistent, coherent, parsimonious, etc., then doubt can be reduced.

Our data showed numerous instances of all of these types of abduction. In Appendix 1, a portion of one subject's attempt to answer the question, "What is the best city/town for you to live?" is shown. The subject can be seen using all of the modes of abduction: following hunches and clues about where she might find relevant information (lines 17-24), using strategies like metaphor and analogy to begin to build tentative answers (as when she considers following links about good places to visit in lines 18 and 19), constructing likely scenarios that she then could examine for compatibility with other relevant information (lines 87-92) and finally arriving at a tentative conclusion (lines 106-111). While induction and deduction wove in and out of her reasoning, abductive strategies played the major role.

One of the most pervasive themes occurring across individuals was the issue of trust, or the reliability of symptoms and clues (e.g., lines 53 - 62). When a participant opened a Webpage, one of the first acts of reasoning was an attempt to abductively analyze the reliability and trustworthiness of that site. Experienced Web surfers looked for signs like the domain of the URL (e.g., .edu sites were more trusted than .com), reputation of the sponsor of the Website, whether or not a product was being sold, whether bibliographies were provided, the credentials of the spokesperson, and so forth. Some participants were reluctant to state a final conclusion to their question based solely on the information found on the Web. Interestingly, many of our subjects expressed a desire to confirm the information in more "authoritative" sources like library books and journal articles.

Where in our curricula today are we teaching the skills of abduction and semiotic consciousness? If you examine most treatments of "learning skills" you find considerable attention to strategies for learning and remembering information in textbooks and lectures but scarcely a word about skepticism, discernment, collaboration and decision making. In a paper I wrote a decade ago (Cunningham, 1992) I argued that a worthy educational goal would be to make semioticians out of all of our students. In my university class I often use little demonstrations and exercises to raise these issues. I ask a student to allow the rest of the class to conduct an inventory of them, enumerating everything the person has brought with them to class that day. In these times of backpacks and deep

## Cunningham: Fear and Loathing in the Information Age

pockets, the inventory can take a long time. On the assumption that whatever someone carries with them is a sign of some aspect of their worldview, the class then tries to figure out what each item says about the person (one has to be very careful about this demonstration as it can easily get very personal, which is, in part, the point!). A version of this task that I use as an out-of-class assignment is to have the students imagine that they are Sherlock Holmes and have just entered their home. Without any knowledge of the actual case, how would Holmes decide how many people lived there, their age, gender, occupation, beliefs, likes, dislikes, and so forth? Having the students take a fresh look at very familiar surroundings is quite instructive. What ARE the structures around which their lives are organized? What things serve as signs? How are the signs organized? To what other signs are they related?

If we follow John Deely (1980, pg. 65) and define semiotics as “reflections upon the role of signs in structuring experience and revealing nature and culture to our understanding,” nothing less than a full semiotic consciousness is required if we are to have citizens who are fully reflexive participants in our democratic society. We need to free ourselves from the “great temptation” of certainty, and learn to live in a world where we must navigate paths to effective action, reasoning to consequences that are useful in the situations in which we find ourselves (Maturana & Varela, 1992). Following Maturana and Varela, I argue that “knowing how we know,” understanding that with every act of knowing we bring forth a world that creates the paths we follow, is the highest objective we can have for our educational system.

Do the right thing! Teach for semiotic consciousness!

## Appendix 1. Sample protocol from Arici, Schreiber and Cunningham (1998)

### Question: Best town or city to live/relocate.

1 Well, first of all I'm thinking that I picked that question because it sounds intriguing and  
 2 I'm sure there are some sites on the Web that probably, although written from various  
 3 perspectives, like tourism boards or something, could be helpful to find on the Web, to  
 4 narrow a search. But I 'm also thinking at this point what to even begin under. So I'm  
 5 just going to go to net search. and I'm trying to figure out a keyword. I'm going to go to  
 6 Yahoo!, 'cause that's the only one I use. As for keywords, first I want to see what titles  
 7 they have, what subdivisions, and see if I can get any ideas from here. (scanning titles of  
 8 categories). Mmm I really can't tell, I think I am going to look just at the United States at  
 9 first....Now these are broken down into states, of course. They have 16 states only, and  
 10 notice that Indiana is not one. This is about western lifestyle, I think that is what I really  
 11 want. I don't think that this is really helping me ...I think I need to start over and try  
 12 and limit it. I'm still stuck on that keyword, I was thinking regions, and then United  
 13 States, but that didn't seem to help me too much. And I'm not sure as far as how it (the  
 14 search engine) is broken down and how wordy I can get on searching. Like "places to  
 15 live", well, maybe I should just try it and see what happens.

16  
 17 I'm thinking that maybe lifestyles may get me into regions based on some things I like,  
 18 the kind of things I'm into. This is travel again. I'm wondering if I pursue travel if that  
 19 will be more sites to see or if that's going to get me into some things about places to live?  
 20 Parenting and Families too, I wonder if that is just a... I'm going to go with Parenting  
 21 and Families because that has a lot to do with, I have children, and I want to get into  
 22 what better areas are for families. This is what I don't like sometimes when I am  
 23 searching. Not knowing exactly what I want. It's frustrating.  
 24 I'm just reading through here. This is more specific, just for parents and that kind of  
 25 thing. I was hoping that it would have something that I could link to. In regards to ....  
 26 OK.... I really don't know what to do. I am going to go to Yahoo! just because I know it  
 27 and I know how things come up in it. And I'm just going to start sticking in words like...  
 28 that way... and see if I can get anywhere. ....OK, I'm going to go back again to.... Darn  
 29 it, I went to Regions already. I'm going to Regions again, because I said that this might  
 30 help me out with the United States, I was here already once. ....I want to know who is  
 31 putting it out, because I tend to be more cynical about what is up here. And critical of  
 32 who is writing it and for what reasons. So I tend to think about that.

33  
 34 Oh great, there is 299... See now this is really, like I'm ready to just pick a blind choice of  
 35 where to live. Because I'm not finding anything. OK... OK.. I'm really... I'm just stuck...  
 36 Yeah, I'm stuck. Either quit or ...I'm just looking to see what comes up under here, the  
 37 subdivisions here (categories). ....I'm going back to Yahoo! Okay, I am about to go  
 38 nuts, I just wanted you to know that so you can transcribe it. Isn't there a category for  
 39 international? I guess that is somewhere else that I was. See I need to get in the habit of  
 40 bookmarking everything and taking it off when I am done with it. I think that would help  
 41 because right now there is something that intrigued me but I didn't bookmark it, so I'm  
 42 lost as to where it was. And that would have helped me a lot.

43

44 Top rated cities, oh actually, I would actually prefer the smaller cities. And that tells you  
45 that you can buy this (book) so you can really compare and sit down for a long time. So  
46 those are all guides that you can actually buy. That's what I want on the Web. And you  
47 would think that has got to be something. Domestic and International, Adult and kids,  
48 OK, we offer hands on cost-effective... OK, now see this is, OK, this is prepared for  
49 foreigners coming to America to live. Which is sort of an interesting way to look at it.  
50 Let's see if there is anything about... this is really for people who are not familiar with our  
51 culture. If you are invited to a wedding... When you go "Dutch treat"... See, this is what I  
52 mean, I start wandering, probably because at this point I am frustrated with what to do.  
53 Now if I had \$75 I would just order this publication, but see, I am one who would still  
54 rather read a book, and I tend to believe it more if it is in print. Even if it is from one of  
55 these companies that are trying to sell me something. Since they publish in so many  
56 different areas I'd be more likely to trust it. Because they aren't just selling in one area.  
57 They just want to sell their books. I don't know why, because I mean a book and current  
58 publications like that can be just as questionable material in a sense, but I guess that  
59 since it has to go through some editors that I would tend to believe more than this (the  
60 Web). I have to admit that when I am looking on the Web I have a hard time just because  
61 anybody can put stuff up, I mean, when I was doing our Web page at first, I could have  
62 put anything up and spun it whatever way and it would be up there. OK, it looks like  
63 these are all services you can order. Guides. To make a smart relocation decision. "No  
64 hype, advertising or sales pitch", I find that hard to believe. I wish there was something  
65 where I could just put in certain areas and certain things I want in that field and it would  
66 narrow it down for me. That is what I was hoping to find. This personal relocation  
67 analyses, maybe that will give me something. This is a whole questionnaire. I wonder if  
68 it is something that you have to mail in? See that would be great, but why isn't it available  
69 on the Web? OK, so I'm feeling like a failure right now. Biiiiigg failure. We are not  
70 moving, I'm staying here, cause I know what it is like here.

71

72 Oh, here's Redbook. Oh, now see this is neat, you can click your icon on this (image). I  
73 like stuff like that, when I am looking I like the visual stuff, or like charts where you have  
74 your buttons so you can go right to it. Working Mothers, that looks interesting. I don't  
75 know if I should have done the search that way though, as a mom. I would like to see  
76 what they have in general before I look at those cities. Maybe those weren't links, maybe  
77 they were just a map. OK, and now I'm actually reading all of this (Redbook page). OK,  
78 now I like this. See now this is what I was looking for, I mean this is what would catch  
79 my eye. It's like this sentence here... "These are places where there are a lot of working  
80 mothers but not a hard driving culture in terms of hours and expectations." That would  
81 be, and it says "The employers and the culture are supportive." That's what I need, family  
82 time. That's why I tried to go through that parenting page at first, I was hoping that would  
83 have something like this. OK, now this is just going to tell me how they got their ratings.  
84 OK, this is for me, so I can look at specific things for me. 'Cause I mean then I have to  
85 look at single-family housing. As a single mother that is a big thing. And Employers is  
86 something I'd like to look at because I want to see if they offer day care on site. Madison  
87 and Washington both interest me (out of the top 10 cities for working mothers). (She  
88 clicked on Madison) OK, here is the narrative that I am looking for. Oh, it's a university

89 town, that is something I am looking for. And they have 8 daycares with the university  
90 itself which is sort of nice. Wow, job sharing. Public schools are supposed to be good.  
91 Enrichment, improvement, that's right, I forgot about the ski team they have. They have  
92 a pretty good one. And they've got the bike trails and outdoor lakes like I like. OK, how  
93 do I go back to the map? Let's try Seattle now. And Colorado.

94

95 Some more big city comments. I have to admit, just from those few word choices that it's  
96 knocked it out. I don't want to live there. The housing prices keep going up with each  
97 city I check. "Funky city", I like that. It's so funny how wording choices can influence  
98 you. I guess that's why I am so cynical of anything that I read on other pages, knowing  
99 that somebody is doing it. Isn't there a university in Boulder? I guess since they didn't  
100 mention a university here,... but I think there is one. Now I'm just going to look at South  
101 Dakota because it is in the general area. This is Redbook, I'm going to write down this  
102 URL just for me. OK, now see the prices are better. Highest percentage of working  
103 mothers, now that's interesting, in the country. Not a liberal city, OK. I wonder if that  
104 means that it would be OK for single mothers? See I mean that is something else I would  
105 like to know. That's what is hard when you are looking for a place in another culture or  
106 country. You really don't know the culture until you are there. OK, from these I would  
107 have to pick Madison, WI as my top from these choices. And I am looking now, just to  
108 sort of verify. What I want to do is look under Madison and see if they have their own  
109 site, to go further. So I am going to go back and wait, I'm going to bookmark this one.  
110 This is sort of not fair, because I've always wanted to go to the University of Wisconsin.  
111 What's funny is that I came up with that from that listing.

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