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Concepts of online text: Elementary students' performance on an observational survey

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Reading online text presents unique challenges for elementary students as they apply fundamental literacy skills to various media. Traditional assessments of concepts about print inspired our research, which applies a similar approach to address "screen handling" instead of book handling. The purpose of our ongoing research has been to develop an instrument to assess concepts related to online reading. The Concepts of Online Text (COT) assessment measures knowledge of online navigation and text features. The guiding question for this study was: what concept knowledge of online texts do elementary students demonstrate in grades one to five? We administered the COT to 80 elementary students in a one-on-one setting. Quantitative analysis of student performance data using the COT provided developmental insight of elementary students' proficiencies in conducting research. Findings from the study indicate that development of both navigation skills and knowledge of online text features increase as students advance in grade levels. Other findings, including the most challenging concepts of online text, will be shared in our presentation.