

Evaluating Websites

Consider...

<i>Currency</i>	Determine if the site is up-to-date. How important is new information in this field? For example, research in biotechnology will need to be current, while historical research is more likely to remain valid over a number of years. Make sure all the links on the page still work, and check when the site was last updated.
<i>Authority</i>	Locate the author, organization or company responsible for the site. Can you find a name? Is this person an expert in the field, or a layperson? Determine whether the information underwent a process of review. Look for references. If an author cites his or her sources, this resource is more likely to be credible.
<i>Objectivity</i>	It's important to consider that an author, or publication, may be biased on a particular topic. Find out whether the publication is from a government or educational institution, or if it's a commercial site or journal. If the purpose is to make money, sometimes information can be skewed. Keep your eye out for a hidden agenda.

Ask yourself...

<i>Who?</i>	Who is the author? What are his/her credentials?
<i>What?</i>	What information is available from this resource?
<i>Where?</i>	Where did the author get the information? Are there citations?
<i>When?</i>	When was the website published? Look for a "created on" or "last updated on" date.
<i>Why?</i>	Why does this website exist? Is the purpose to entertain, persuade, or inform? Is it biased?
<i>How?</i>	How comprehensive is the resource? Does it go into the depth you need?

Try Searching Domains with Google...

In some cases, you may want to eliminate commercial results when searching the internet. Use Google's advanced search to limit your search to only government and educational websites.

1. Go to http://www.google.com/advanced_search.
2. Scroll down until you see the option to "Search within a site or domain." There you can enter a specific site or domain.
 - a. For government sites (useful when you need health, legal, or demographic information, or when you need statistics), type *.gov*.
 - b. For educational sites (for information on writing or citation, educational programs, and some research*), type *.edu*.
3. This can also be used to search within a specific site (ex: <http://www.nytimes.com>)

*Note that sometimes students are given webspace on a college's site, and information they post may not always be credible. It's still important to examine the authority of a resource.