

Evaluating Internet Sites



Considerations for
dealing with Internet
sources

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Using the Internet allows researchers to:

- Find materials quickly and conveniently
- Search large amounts of material to find the best information
- Get information from government, professional, and educational sites

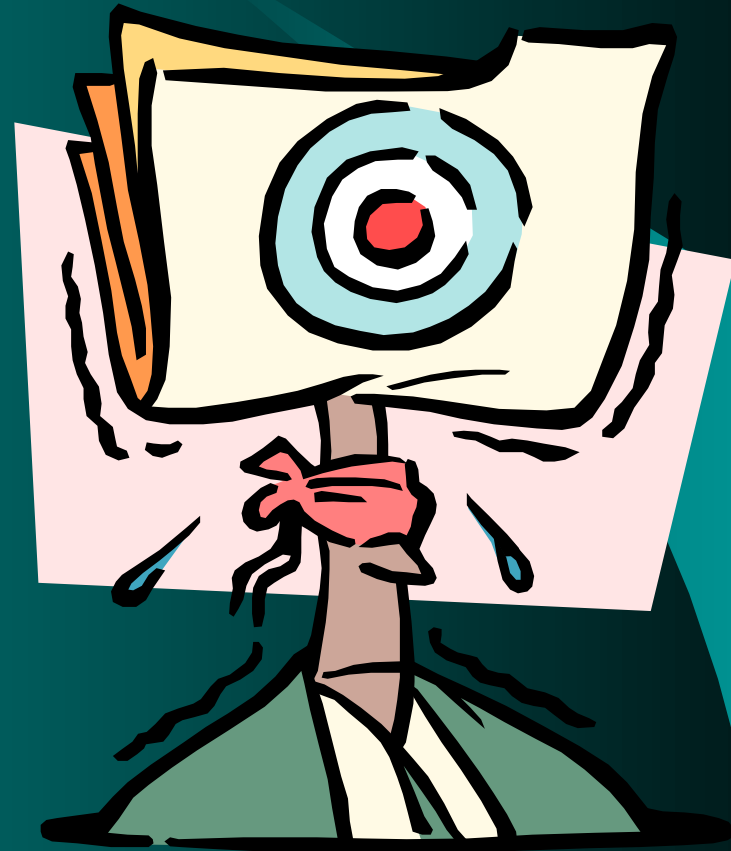
Using the Internet differs from traditional sources.



- Books require editors and a publishing company to back any claim an author makes.
- Magazines and journals depend on research staffs whose entire job is to verify and check facts for their stories.

Internet sites require no background checks

- Anyone who has a computer can create an internet site.
- It is the job of the savvy student to target only the most reliable sites as sources for a good research paper.



Investigate the Site

- The World Wide Web can be a great source of information for research, but you must discover all you can about the site before you stake the reliability of your whole paper on it.



To check the reliability of a source, consider

- Domain names
- Biases and site sponsors
- Truth behind the “FACT” sites
- Authority of the source
- Update dates

Domain names



- Three letter ending for URL
- .com
- .org
- .net
- .gov
- .edu

Which is the official web page of the White House?

- www.whitehouse.com
- www.whitehouse.org
- www.whitehouse.net
- www.whitehouse.gov

Often what looks like reliable information can be biased when the site sponsor is investigated

- Pay attention to the heading of the web page which may show who paid for this information.
- Follow the links backwards by removing information that follows the backslash to find the home page of the organization

Does knowing who sponsors this information make you more or less likely to use it in a research essay?

- Information of alcohol and pregnancy

www.hmvineyard.com/article4.html

- A different look at DARE

www.drcnet.org/DARE/

SpooF sites

- Be sure the site is real before using it as a reference
- These certainly look like legitimate sites with good information, but should you use them?

www.d-b.net/dti

[www.ithaca.edu/staff/jhenderson/AIDSFAC
TS.html](http://www.ithaca.edu/staff/jhenderson/AIDSFACTS.html)

Authoritative Sites

- Avoid personal home pages as sources for information.
- Look for sites sponsored by reliable experts in the field such as universities, government organizations, and non-profit information organizations.

Authoritative Sites

- Which of these two sites is better for a college research essay of lupus?

www.public.asu.edu/~cyndee74

www.lupus.org

Paper Mills

- Unfortunately, typing in topics in a search engine may accidentally link you to a paper mill.
- Paper mills charge or sometimes provide essays to students for free.
- Be aware of what these sites look like, and avoid them like the plague. They will cause you to fail the class.
- Typing in ancient Greece brings up this site. Should you use its information?

<http://www.4freessays.com/essays/767.shtml>

Updated Sites

- Always check the bottom of the site for the last date it was updated.
- Ghost sites are sites that have not been kept up but are still on the web.
- If a site does not receive a lot of activity or has not been updated in the last few months, avoid it.

Make sure you know your way around the web.

- Any idiot with a computer can create a web page.
- Don't get lost in the mass of information.
- Navigate the web with confidence by learning how to evaluate Internet sites.

