

Evaluating Webpages

There are a number of questions you should ask yourself before you use a webpage as a source for a paper or other assignment. The next time you consider using a website for an assignment ask the following questions about the site and see how it rates.

- ⌘ Who wrote/created the webpage?
- ⌘ Can you contact the webpage's creator/author?
- ⌘ What are the creator/author's credentials?
- ⌘ Is the information on the page true? Can it be verified by another source?
- ⌘ Why did the creator/author create the webpage? Is the purpose to entertain, inform, present research, advertise, sway opinion, or sell something?
- ⌘ What is the domain extension of the document? (.com, .gov, .mil, .edu, etc...)
- ⌘ Is the document objective or is the information biased in some way?
- ⌘ When was the page created?
- ⌘ When was the page last updated?
- ⌘ Do you have to register or pay to access the information?
- ⌘ If you have to register to access the site, how will the personal information collected be used? (Look for the site's "Privacy Policy.")
- ⌘ Is the information appropriate for your assignment?
- ⌘ Where does the information come from? Is it cited correctly?
- ⌘ Does the site have links to relevant external websites and do the links work?
- ⌘ What is the depth of coverage of the information?

Make sure any webpage you use as a source for a research paper or assignment is accurate, authoritative, current, objective, and provides adequate coverage of the topic.

A word of caution: There are many spoof/parody sites and webpages that contain intentionally false or misleading information. These webpages can be extremely well designed and you will be able to answer most, if not all of the above questions. It is vital that you use critical thinking to determine the veracity of the information contained on any website you visit.