



Evaluating Internet Sources

The internet is an excellent research tool, but because of the vast amount of information available on it, it is crucial to ensure that your sources are credible.

Here are some tips on how to evaluate internet sources:

1. Look for the Author:

- Can you find an author of the site? If the author isn't listed on the page you've found, do some scrolling and searching. If no author (or sponsoring organization) can be found, it might be best to avoid this source.
- If an author can be identified, decide if the author is a credible source. Are his or her qualifications listed? Does he or she have a clear bias on the subject?

2. Seek out the Sponsor:

- Does the website have a sponsor? You can usually find this information on the homepage. Is the sponsor credible?
- What information does the domain name provide? The domain name indicates the type of organization that hosts the site: commercial (.com); educational (.edu); nonprofit (.org), governmental (.gov), military (.mil), or network (.net).
- Given the domain name and/or sponsor, what biases might this site promote? It's ok to draw information from a site that is biased (all sources are), but you want to be aware of them.
- Are there advertisements posted on the site? What for? Why? Do they indicate a bias or motive?

3. Identify the Purpose and Audience:

- What is the function of the site? Does it make an argument? Educate? Sell a product? Be wary of sites that pretend to give information but that are really advertisements.
- Who is the site's intended audience? If you are not a member of this audience, is the information still relevant for your research purposes?

4. Determine the site's Age:

- When was this site developed? Check for the date of publication or the latest update.
- How current are the site links? If many of them no longer work, that indicates the site is likely dated. Avoid using old or outdated information.

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2002.