

Evaluating Resources on the Web

1. What does the URL tell you? e.g. is the domain extension? Within the US: .com =commercial; .org = organization (usually not-for-profit); .edu = university or college; .gov = local, state, or US federal. Other countries often add a country extension (i.e. United Kingdom =.uk, germany = .de)
2. Who is the author/creator/maintainer of the site? What are his/her credentials? (Is that information available?) Are his/her qualifications relevant to the subject matter?
3. When was the site last updated?
4. Are the author's motives discernable? Does the information convey a bias? Does the author appear to have an axe to grind, or seem blindly committed to his/her cause?
5. Does the author substantiate his points with facts or complete references?
6. Does the site have any sponsors? Is it promoting a product?
7. Who is the site's intended audience?
8. Do the links lead to useful information corroborating the site's statements, or to they link to other questionable information?
9. Is the site well designed? Is it rife with poor grammar, punctuation or typos?
10. Bottom line: would this site be a useful source for a research paper? Does it present balanced information, or, if not, does it credibly represent a point of view?

<http://pubweb.acns.nwu.edu/~abutz/>

A site that states the Holocaust didn't happen, written by an electrical engineering professor with a PDF version of his book available.

This site has moved – see explanation at:

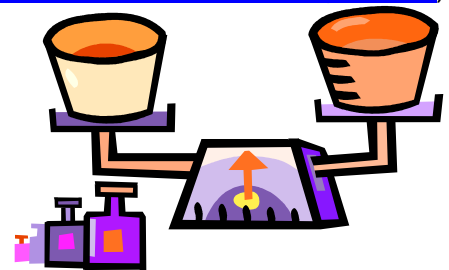
http://novemberlearning.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=39&Itemid=85

<http://www.theadvisorygroup.com/index2.html>

The website CO2 & Climate is presented by the "Greening Earth Society" and is upbeat about global warming. "Fuel suppliers" support it.

http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2000/ast24aug_1.htm

Counting Brown Dwarfs



If the same information is available in multiple places – which should I use? A sixth grade science report? Or NASA?

Cosmic census finds universe full of brown dwarves

<http://archives.cnn.com/2000/TECH/space/08/23/hubble.brown.dwarves/index.html>

Where does the web page fit?



Journals
Patents
Standards
Documents
Technical Reports
Conferences
Dissertations
Trade journals/magazines
National Newspapers
Magazines
Local Newspapers
Pamphlets
Newsletters
Flyers
Letters (Correspondence)
Bulletin Boards
Gossip

Definitions

- **Primary** – In the sciences, primary sources are articles written by the person who did the research/experiment and may include synthesis of previous research by others. Usually primary sources contain sections on experimental methodology and data.
- **Secondary** – In the sciences, secondary resources talk about the research rather than reporting the results.
- **Peer Review** – A formal process of evaluating and revising articles before they are published. Also called “refereed”.
- **Review Article** – The author pulls together the relevant research literature on a topic usually for a specified time period. The author summarizes and evaluates the research while providing citations to the primary literature.
- **Research Article** – The author’s purpose is to report on research done. Generally a complete research article will include experimental data, procedures or protocols used to generate the data, as well as a discussion of the data. Most will reference other literature.
- **Technical Report** – A formal document prepared by the engineer to communicate the status of a project. Style and elements vary depending on sponsoring organization but will normally contain a detailed description of a design, test, and/or results and recommendations.

For more information about scholarly journals and magazines, go to <http://libinfo.uark.edu/reference/tutorials>.