

EVALUATING INTERNET SOURCES

Not everything you see online is true. That's why it's so important to screen websites before you use them to help with homework or for information in a school report.

Use this checklist to figure out if the online source you're using is reliable.

Evaluate the WEBSITE

- What is the domain?** Look at the Web address for clues about what kind of website you're using.

Reliable

.edu: a school, college, or university
.gov: a government agency

? Check carefully

.com: a commercial business
.net: a network
.org: an advocacy group

- Is the system navigable?** A reliable website will have links to find what you need.

- Are there a lot of errors?** Spelling and grammar mistakes probably mean it's not trustworthy.

Evaluate the AUTHOR

- Is there an author listed?** The author should be easy to identify and contact.
- Is he/she an expert?** The author should be qualified to write on this subject.
- What else has he/she published?** An author is more reliable if he or she has published other works.

Evaluate the INFORMATION

- Is it current and accurate?** The information should be up to date and include references.
- Can you find it on other sites?** Make sure the information appears in other reliable sources, including websites, books, and articles.
- Is it fact or opinion?** Be sure to note when you're using someone's opinion and when you're using proven facts.

Hint

Trust your gut! If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't.

NetSmartz.org/TipSheets

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