

## EVALUATING WEB SITES

Evaluating web sites requires you to train your mind to think **critically, even suspiciously** by asking a series of questions that will help you decide how much a web page is to be trusted.

Anyone can put anything on the internet.

It is often difficult to tell...what something is  
where it came from  
who the author is  
when it was written

1. Look at the URL(address for a page on the web) ex. <http://www.firstgov.org> (.gov, .mil, .us, .edu, .org are usually preferred sites).

Common Domain Suffixes

.com=commercial  
.edu=educational  
.gov=government  
.net=network management  
.org=noncommercial/nonprofit  
.mil=military

Domain names can identify a country

.au=Australia  
.ch=Switzerland  
.uk=United Kingdom  
.us=United States

2. Look for the name of the person or organization responsible for the page.

If you cannot find anything, **truncate back the URL** by deleting the end characters of the URL stopping before each / (leave the slash). Press enter to see if you can find more about the author. When you reach the first single / which is preceded by the domain name – this is the page’s server or publisher.

3. Look for the date or currency of the page.
4. Look for indicators of quality information.

What are the author’s credentials? You must distinguish between an opinionated rant by a self-proclaimed expert and someone who has the background or education to write on this subject. Is the information reproduced from another publication? Are there links to the original source if it is online? Are there links to other resources on the topic and do the links represent other viewpoints?  
Are the grammar and spelling correct?

### THINK TWICE ABOUT USING A WEB SITE FOR A COLLEGE PAPER OR SPEECH IF...

1. You can’t find the name of the person or agency who wrote or posted the information.
2. You have no sense of the credentials of the person who posted the site.
3. You can’t find a date of posting.
4. The site lacks coverage, is not clear, is biased or exists to sell a product.