

Evaluating Internet Resources

Used thoughtfully, the World Wide Web can be a powerful research tool. This guide will help *you* determine which Internet resources to use for the kind of information you need. To begin, know *what you are looking for*:

- ...*original scientific research?*
- ...*reference facts like dates?*
- ...*information on a current event?*
- ...*information on a not so current event?*
- ...*a critique or evaluation of an important work?*

The Internet contains all this and more. However, the Internet is a self-publishing medium. When you use free search engines like Yahoo! or Google, you are getting information that has been provided by anyone with a computer. Basically there is no evaluation process determining what appears online -- that work has to be done by **you**.

EVALUATING INTERNET RESOURCES WORKSHEET

By asking the following questions, you may be able to determine if the information you find on the Internet is appropriate for your needs:

PURPOSE	AUTHORSHIP	CONTENT	DESIGN
<p>What is it? Is it a webpage only, an article from a scholarly journal, a government publication, a sales pitch?</p> <p>Who is the intended audience for this work, is it meant for professionals, scholars, the general public, customers?</p>	<p>Who is the author and what are his/her credentials or expertise in this area?</p> <p>Who sponsors the site? Look at the URL of the site: .com-a commercial enterprise .gov-government sponsored site .edu-an educational organization .org-an organization</p>	<p>Does this add new information or have you read it before?</p> <p>Is it accurate?</p> <p>Who funds the site? Does it advertise a product or service?</p> <p>Is there a bias or point of view?</p> <p>Is it current?</p> <p>Who has critiqued the information?</p> <p>Are the sources clearly stated?</p>	<p>Is it logically and clearly displayed?</p> <p>Is the writing style appropriate for the audience?</p> <p>Are there typos or misspellings?</p> <p>Are the links working?</p>

Besides Google and Yahoo! there are **other search engines** that you may find useful in your research:

Ask.com www.ask.com	Clusty clusty.com	Dogpile www.dogpile.com	Google Scholar scholar.google.com	Scirus scirus.com
Suggests broader and narrower terms to enhance search	Clusters of search results; formerly search.vivisimo.com	Search multiple search engines at once; includes Google, Yahoo!, etc.	Search scholarly literature; articles, texts, technical papers, peer-reviewed journals	Science search engine; includes courseware and journal articles

BEYOND THE OPEN WEB

The Library provides access to a large number of databases and other sites containing high quality content that is not available on the free, open World Wide Web. These sites contain information that is evaluated by editors, librarians, and specialists in their fields of study. They contain information like journal and newspaper articles, data & statistics, and specialized images, video and audio content. To access the Library's collection of information not found on the open web --information suited for researchers, scholars and students-- go to <http://www.stonybrook.edu/library> and begin with [Galaxy Quick Search](#), or click on [Databases](#).

