"Author"ity

Verify the professional credentials by identifying the author(s), sponsor(s), and publisher(s) of web content. This information may require careful detection to locate, but is often found at the bottom of most web pages.

Ask yourself:
- Who is the website’s content author or authors?
  - Is it a person, group, agency, organization?
- Who created the site?
- What are the professional credentials?
  - Are the credentials verifiable?
- What entity sponsors/publishes the site?
  - Are they reliable?
- What is the domain type?
  - Does the .com satisfy your research needs?
- Who is the domain sponsor?
  - Are there affiliates that influence content?

Accuracy

Target reputable websites known for providing factual material. Scan the website for validity and use of citations.

Ask yourself:
- Are the assertions and “facts” verifiable?
  - Are citations provided?
- Is there supporting evidence indicating that the content is well-researched?
- Does a reputable web site rating service list the site (Librarian’s Index to the Internet, Info MINE, Britannica Online, etc.)?

Currency

Ensure that the information provided is up-to-date.

Ask yourself:
- When was the page’s content last updated?
  - Is the date displayed in reference to the web site, or the actual article / page of interest?
- Are the links within the page still current?
**Objectivity**

Consider in whose best interest the content is presented. Ask yourself:

- Are there any indications that show if the purpose of the content is to inform, entertain, or persuade?
- Is factual information being presented without bias?
  - Do the site creators show a particular bias in their presentation of information and interpretations?
- What types of sites link to the web site?
  - What comes up when you enter the URL into a search engine?

**Coverage & Comparability**

Consider depth and breadth of topic coverage. Ask yourself:

- What topics does the website cover?
- How in-depth is the coverage of topics?
  - Is the site intended to be comprehensive or selective?
- How does the site compare to related resources available elsewhere online or in print?

**Maintenance & Design**

Ensure that the web site is functional and reliable. Ask yourself:

- Is the site easy to navigate?
- Is the site well organized with an index available?
- Is there trouble connecting to the site, page, or links?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INDICATORS OF SCHOLARSHIP</strong></th>
<th><strong>INDICATORS OF PROPAGANDA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describes limits of research of data.</td>
<td>Claims of certainty, i.e. one &quot;right&quot; way of thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents accurate descriptions of alternate viewpoints.</td>
<td>Relies on personal attacks and ridicule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks for counter-examples.</td>
<td>Appeals to popular prejudices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admits own ignorance.</td>
<td>Transforms words and statistics to suit purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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