

Evaluating Internet Web Sites

The information found in the books, magazine, newspaper, and journal articles in the Windham High School Library and Databases have been evaluated by editors, publishers, and academic reviewers. The quality of information available on the World Wide Web varies greatly, since few Internet websites have gone through a similar process of editing, peer review, and library selection. Both the strength and the weakness of information on the Internet is that anyone can publish. As a result, it is important to critically evaluate Internet websites.

The ABCD Method of Evaluating Internet Sites

Author/Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is presenting the information? Is the author's name provided?• What are the author's credentials or level of expertise?• Is the author or organization qualified to write on the topic?• Can the author be contacted? Is an email address or street address or phone number listed?• Where is the page published? Check URL domain (.edu, .org, .com, .gov)
Bias/Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of the page?• Was it created to inform, to sell, to entertain, or persuade?• Does the author or organization make their intentions clear?• Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?• Is a particular point of view being presented?
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the page have references?• Is the information consistent with print sources or other types of electronic sources on the subject?• Who is the intended audience?• Is the material easy for you to understand? Too easy? Too difficult? Appropriate for a high school level research paper?• Is the information provided a complete and in-depth coverage of the topic, or is it a superficial treatment?• How does the page compare with web sites on the same subject?• Do the links to additional information work?
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When was the page written?• Has it been updated recently?• Is it important that the information be recent?

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Types of Websites

Type of Site	Domain	Characteristics
Government	.gov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide facts, statistics, information on current issues • Some of the most useful and reliable Internet sites.
Education	.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide scholarly works from academic departments • Individual student and faculty pages vary in authority and accuracy
Business or commercial	.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May include annual reports, company history, product information and help • May attempt to sell a product; may present advertising as information • The vast majority of web sites
Non-profit organization	.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May attempt to influence opinion • May provide studies, statistics, and resources; check facts presented against other sources
Military	.mil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides information about the military.
Personal	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be difficult to determine author's affiliation and credentials • May not be an authority on the topic

Reference: <http://www.goldenwestcollege.edu/library/pdf/EvaluatingWebSites.pdf>

Websites to check out:

Windham High School Library
 Windham Public Library
 Portland Public Library

www.whslibrary.org
www.windham.lib.me.us/
www.portlandlibrary.com/