



EVALUATING THE SOURCE

IDENTIFYING TRUSTWORTHY RESOURCES IN A WORLD OF INFORMATION



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Domain: Sites that end in .edu and .gov are administered by universities or state and federal government agencies. Sites that end in .com or .org or .net can be purchased by individuals.
- Author: Is the author clearly stated? When a professional attaches their name to an idea, it lends credibility.
- Date: Has the website been recently updated? This is especially important for medical information, which can frequently change and is influenced by recent studies.
- Sources: Are sources cited for cross referencing?
- Style: Is the site well written, free of grammatical errors, and easy to understand?
- Design: Is the site well designed?

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Advertisements: A lot of advertisements are a sign that ad revenue trumps unbiased information.
- Broken Links: Broken links are a sign that the site is not being maintained and the information may be out of date.
- What is the purpose of the site?
 - To inform? Government and university sources often fall under this category (.gov/.edu)
 - To advocate? Nonprofits or other organizations often have the goal of influencing opinion (.com/.net/.org)
 - To report? News resources look to provide current information, but are not as reliable as academic journals and credibility varies from source to source – think the Enquirer vs. The Washington Post (mostly .com)
 - To share personal experience? Often times these are blogs and other social media related sites. While these sources may be good for personal connection or emotional support, information obtained should be used with extreme caution. (.com/.net)