

Evaluating Internet Sites: What You Need to Know

- Who is the **author** of the web page? Author can be individual/organization/group
 - What are author's **credentials**—advanced degrees, books written?
 - Search Library Catalog or WilsonWeb/Ebscohost
 - Google author or organization with name in quotation marks
 - E-mail the author/organization/group/business
 - Is the author affiliated with a reputable institution?
 - Example—Dr. James Reitter, Assistant Professor of English, UW Sheboygan; PhD, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; MFA Writing/Poetry, CUNY Brooklyn
 - Read **About Us, FAQ, History, Mission** links for this information
- **Accuracy**—Verify information with other sources—books (online or print), periodical articles (online or print), reliable web site—i.e. *CIA World Factbook*
- **Currency**—when was web page created, and when was it last updated?
 - If you need the most current information, use a web page updated recently
 - Check copyright, often at bottom of page
 - Are links to other web pages working—i.e. go to right page?
 - If articles are listed, how current are they?
- **Tone/Bias of material**
 - Why was the web page created? What is its purpose?
 - To inform (multiple viewpoints presented)
 - To persuade (advocate a specific viewpoint)
 - To entertain
 - To sell you something
 - To mislead—don't use
 - Uncertain—don't use
 - You can use accurate, biased web sites, but you need other viewpoints
- What is the **category** of the page, called **Domain**?
 - Look at URL=web page address—i.e. <http://www.sheboygan.uwc.edu/library>
 - Truncate the address; first part after *http://* and before the /
 - <http://www.sheboygan.uwc.edu/>
 - The abbreviation before the /, in this case *.edu* is the *Domain*.
 - Domain gives another clue to reliability of web page/site. This is just one criterion. Quality varies widely—i.e. not all *.edu* pages are reliable.
 - A tilde (~) usually means a personal home page
 - Common *Domains*:
 - *.edu* = education
 - *.com* = *commercial (dot com)* business oriented
 - *.gov* = *government*
 - *.org* = *organization*
 - *.net* = *network*