

Evaluating Internet Sites: Plus Scholarly Sources

- 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), articles (online or print), reliable web site—i.e. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- **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
- **Scholarly Web Sites Criteria** (much like criteria for scholarly print sources)
 - Is Author(s) an expert in subject(s)? What else has he/she written?
 - Where is he/she employed—A reputable college, university, association, research center, or is the online article published by a scholarly press?
 - Is a bibliography included? Is it short or long (longer list indicates more comprehensive research)
 - Audience: who is the target audience? The language should be at least at the college reading level or that of the specialist or researcher.
 - Usefulness—reports original research, in-depth analysis of subjects, provides statistical information or graphs, charts and tables