

## Check for functionality

**Make sure the website provides practical tools for use.**

- \* Is the site well organized and easy to navigate?
- \* Are all page links live?
- \* Do the titles and headings give a clear idea of the content?
- \* Is there a site map?
- \* Do pages load quickly?
- \* Are there links to other places within the website?
- \* Are multimedia elements used sparingly and for a specific purpose? Or are they distracting?
- \* Does the site have any advertisements or banners that might distract me from my purpose for visiting?



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## QUALITY COUNTS

Your quick guide to  
checking information quality.

## Evaluating Websites



**Finding good, useful information  
on the internet can be easy if you  
know what to look for.**

# How to read a website

## Look at the web address (URL)

**.com** – *commercial site* – most common domain, but often not the best choice for academic research

**.net** – *network* – similar to .com, thus not often the best choice for academic research

**.gov** – *U.S. government sites* – best source for health information, current information about branches of government, elected representatives, etc.

**.edu** – *educational institutions* – good for research, except if the web address includes a ~ (tilde), you are looking at a personal web page attached to the university's site

**.org** – *organization* – may include accurate information, but should always be confirmed with other valid sources

Two letter domain names (.ca, .jp, .au) mean that the site is from a foreign country.

**Personal pages are not reliable**—this includes blogs, social media sites, websites that are owned & operated by individuals.

## Important things to look for on a website

### Authority

Who is the author/creator? (this could be one or more persons, an organization, agency, company or institution).

Does the person who created the site have the experience and knowledge to present this information? How do you know?

Can you contact the author/creator? Is there an address, email address or phone number where the author can be reached?

### Purpose Why was the site created?

To inform you?

To persuade you?

To sell you something?

To amuse or entertain you?

### Readability

Is the information easy to read and understand?

### Objectivity

Look for prejudice or bias.

### Validity

Can you find at least two other valid resources that confirm this information? (book, magazine, another website)

### Usability

Does the site have the information you need?

### Currency

When was it published?

What is the copyright date?

When was the site last updated?

Beware of ads or sponsored links. These are websites (most often .coms) that appear at the top of the search results screen and/or down the right side of the screen. These sites PAY search engines to place their results near the top.