

Evaluating Web Pages

PH2.11: Evaluate a webpage to determine if the information is credible.



What clues would you look for to know whether or not you could trust the information you find on a website? List as many as you can below.

DISCUSS

With a partner, choose ONE types of website you might access or know about (ex: social media, blogs, news, companies, online retailers, review websites, medical information, governmental sites, nonprofits, online encyclopedias, etc.). Then fill in the table below:

| Questions: | Your Answers: |
|---|---------------|
| What type of site did you choose? | |
| What is an example of that type of site? (URL) | |
| What is the purpose of that site? | |
| What type of information might people learn from that type of site? | |
| Is that information reliable? (Always? Sometimes? Never?) | |
| How would people know whether or not it is reliable? | |



Evaluating Information from the Web

Millions of people have access to the internet and creating content has become simple. Think of just about any question or topic and you can find information on it in just seconds. It's easy to forget how remarkable this technological breakthrough really is. However, with the Internet's ease of finding information comes a serious challenge: ensuring the information is credible. A few decades ago, when you wanted to research a topic, you'd visit a library where books, scholarly journals, magazines, and other media sources could be accessed. This system limited the number of sources available, but helped maintain a more reliable system of credibility. After all, for a book or article to be published, it had to be screened by editors and often other experts in the field. Yet the Internet does not require any filtering or editing before posting information. It is free and easy for anyone to post content online. Therefore we must be more careful.

What is credibility?

Credibility can be defined as "the quality of being trusted and believed in." If a website source is credible, we might also say it has **reliable** information or that we can depend on its information as being **accurate**. If we are looking for scientific information, a credible source would also provide content that is **unbiased** and **current**.

How do we determine credibility?

There is no one-size-fits-all test, unfortunately. Determining credibility is more similar to solving a mystery by gathering clues. Here are some of the clues you should look for:

The URL:

What to look for? Sources from educational institutions (.edu), governmental organizations (.gov), and .nonprofits (.org) or commercial sites (.com) that are well-established and recognized in the field.

What to avoid? Blogs and personal pages (often part of the person's name is in the URL), Companies with advertising on their page or that are clearly trying to sell something (sometimes this can be difficult to recognize at first glance)

The Perimeter of the Page:

What to look for? Last updated date (usually at the very bottom), About page explaining the organization's purpose, philosophy and structure, Author (with credentials and contact information), however often an agency or organization is responsible for the material so no author is listed

What to avoid? Missing information about the source of content, missing date, author with no credentials

Source Documentation:

What to look for? Footnotes or links should be provided to other reliable sources, permissions and copyright information

What to avoid? Reproduced content that does not link back to sources



Choose any 2 websites about the topic of fitness (specifically google: "building muscle"). Fill out the table below based on your evaluation of the credibility of the site.

Website #1: _____ Credible / Not Credible (circle one, after you finish)

| Clues | Type of Information: | What did you find? |
|---------------|---|--------------------|
| The URL | .edu, .gov, .org, .com, or something else? | |
| The Perimeter | Information to look for: Title, Author, Date, Page update date? | |
| Sources | Footnotes & links to reliable sources? | |

Website #2: _____ Credible / Not Credible (circle one, after you finish)

| Clues | Type of Information: | What did you find? |
|---------------|---|--------------------|
| The URL | .edu, .gov, .org, .com, or something else? | |
| The Perimeter | Information to look for: Title, Author, Date, Page update date? | |
| Sources | Footnotes & links to reliable sources? | |



Name 3 things you would look for to determine whether a source is credible:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Find one **credible** and one **non-credible** website related to **childhood obesity**:

Credible site (URL): _____
Why?

Non-credible site (URL): _____
Why?