

Can you trust what you find on the Internet? Maybe. *Maybe not...*

Trust Your ABC's!

These simple clues will help you to critically evaluate the websites found online. Make informed decisions before you risk your grades on unreliable or flawed information!

AUTHORITY Who launched the page? Is the author a recognized expert? Is there a way to contact the webmaster or the author with any questions or corrections you might have? Are their names and credentials readily available? Are there references to where the information came from in a bibliography or footnote page?

ACCURACY Anyone with a computer and Internet access can create a webpage. We need to look deeper than just reading what is there. Can you verify information provided? Are there citations to reliable sources (such as .edu sites sponsored by educational institutions)? Is there a bibliography (list of resources) indicating where the information came from?

BIAS There will always be a bit of bias in every piece of published information, but reliable authors work to keep things balanced. Ask yourself: *was this page created to assist researchers? Or was it made to sell a product or service, or persuade the reader to see only a specific point of view? Is the information equalized or does it lean heavily to one side or another?*

BREADTH Ask yourself: *how much data do I need? A brief overview? In-depth information? Coverage from beginning to end, and everything in between? Now: does the website offer what you need?*

CURRENCY Is there anything that tells you when the site was last updated (typically found on the right or bottom side of the page)? Is there an annotation telling you the date/time the last person looked at the page? Are the links current? Click on some of them—do they still appear to work, or

do you get a 404 (broken link) error? If there is a bibliography (a list of all the resources used to create the page), how recent are the dates of the materials listed there? Take note of the overall look of the page—does it look dated, like it was loaded 10 years ago? Are there current graphics or photographs? How recent are any dates provided in the information?

COMPARISON Is the information found on the Internet as thorough, valuable, and valid as that found in traditional research sources such as books and journals? How does the material from the web compare with what you found in those traditional sources?

Other Considerations...

- * **Is it easy to move around the site?** Try clicking on links, moving from page to page or from a link back to the home page.
- * **Is the information free?** Can you look up and retrieve more than just a description of the data, or must you pay for full access to all the information?
- * **How does the page appear?** Is the look of it professional, or are there problems such as poor spacing, incongruous color, background, or font choices, misspelled words, or poor grammar/punctuation?
- * **Where does it come from?** Domains ending with
 - .edu (an educational organization),
 - .gov (the federal government),
 - .org (an organization or association), or
 - .mil (the military)may have better information than .com (i.e., commercial) or .biz (business) sites.
- * **REMEMBER:** If you find information that is too good to be true, then it probably is! Don't use anything from the Internet that you cannot verify on another, trusted site, or in print.

Search **GOOGLE SCHOLAR** and link to resources in the SBVC Library!

1. Go to <http://scholar.google.com>
2. On the left side of the screen near the top, click on the triple-bar icon (☰) to open a navigation bar. Click on **Settings**.
3. Now click on **Library Links**.
4. Type **San Bernardino Valley College** into the search box, and then click **Save**. Now type **Open WorldCat – Library Search** in the search box, and click **Save**. (Note: cookies must be enabled in order to save this change on your computer.)
5. That's it! Now when you do a search in **Google Scholar**, the results list will include links to the material—including full-text articles—and other information found in the SBVC Library's reference databases.

Did You Know?

Google Scholar can also cite the references for you in AMA, APA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian, Harvard, and even Vancouver citation styles.

Ask the Librarian at the Reference Desk how to do this!

Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A **librarian** can bring you back the **right** one.

—Neil Gaiman