Evaluating Websites

The World Wide Web is one of the greatest resources to use for information; however, sources found there are not always accurate and reliable. With such a great focus on collaboration and social networking, it’s getting even harder to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. Because anybody can now so easily post on the internet (through blogs, social networking sites, etc), it's important to really analyze your sources and check them for credibility.

For evaluating webpages, we can still use the same evaluation criteria that was introduced earlier. Here are some specifics questions/things to look out for that are unique to webpages.

- Who wrote this? This can be hard to find at times, but a reliable page will still provide its author. The footer of the webpage will often have this information and, if not, sometimes you can tell by simply looking at the webpage's domain (for example, if it’s a government organization)
- Does the webpage provide you with any options of contacting the author?
- Is there a mission statement or an "About Us" link? Often webpages will use this spot to post about whether or not they take responsibility for the content that is posted.
- Does the page tell you when it was last updated?
- Are the links working and current?
- Is the page organized and easy to navigate? Or is it glitchy and full of intrusive ads?
- Does the webpage have a 'search' feature?
Example of a Credible Website – News

Hundreds of research chimps may be retired

By Elizabeth Landau, CNN
updated 5:54 AM EST, Thu January 31, 2013

Content: Overview of what is in the article

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

• The National Institutes of Health owns 360 research-eligible chimpanzees
• Chimpanzees share about 99% of their DNA with humans
• The NIH recommends keeping 50 chimpanzees in a colony for potential research
• The new report is open to public comment for 60 days

Laboratory chimps get a new lease on life

Plans to accommodate additional retiring chimpanzees should begin "immediately," the report said.

But the report does not call for the elimination of all research on chimpanzees, who share about 99% of their DNA with humans. About 50 chimpanzees should be kept for potential research needs, the report said. They could all live in the same colony to minimize costs.

In December 2011, the Institute of Medicine proposed guidelines (PDF) for chimpanzee research, stating that there is little anticipated

Publisher: Information provided in order to determine if a credible source or not

Citations & Links: Links to related stories and to relevant information discussed in the article.

Author: A journalist with easily verifiable credentials.

Currency: The article provides a publishing date

Links to related stories and to relevant information discussed in the article.
Example of a Credible Source – Website

Domain: The .gov domain tells us this is an government affiliated website

Content: An overview (and shortcuts) to what is covered in the article & supplements

What are some risk factors for nonfatal suicide attempts?

- As noted, an estimated 11 nonfatal suicide attempts occur per every suicide death. Men and the elderly are more likely to have fatal attempts than are women and youth.
- Risk factors for nonfatal suicide attempts by adults include depression and other mental disorders, alcohol and other substance abuse and separation or divorce.
- Risk factors for attempted suicide by youth include depression, alcohol or other drug-use disorder, physical or sexual abuse, and disruptive behavior.
- Most suicide attempts are expressions of extreme distress, not harmless bids for attention. A person who appears suicidal should not be left alone and needs immediate mental-health treatment.

Citations & Links: Facts are cited and link directly to the articles References section

Publisher: Information provided in order to help determine if a credible source or not

Currency: The article provides a publishing date

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Related Information
- See all NIMH publications about:
  - Prevention
  - Statistics
  - Suicide Prevention
  - Browse Mental Health Topics
  - About NIMH Publications

References
1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Nation and Reporting System (NISQARS): www.cdc.gov/nisqars

This page last reviewed: September 27, 2010.
Example of a Questionably Credible Source – News Blog

NASA Probe Snaps Photos of Potential 'Comet of the Century'

Author: There is no information provided by the author, nor is any easily accessible.

Currency: Content appears to be current; however, it is reposted from another website, 'Space.com.' The hyperlink provided do not redirect to the original post.

Will Comet ISON Sizzle or Fizzle?

Some projections state that comet ISON, which is officially designated comet C/2012 S1 [ISON], could shine extremely bright in the nighttime sky, possibly even rivaling the full moon. Whether the comet will meet expectations or fizzle out remains to be seen, but it has already become a target for NASA and amateur astronomers.

"This is the fourth comet on which we have performed science observations and the farthest point from Earth from which we’ve tried to transmit data on a comet," Deep Impact project manager Tim Larson, of the agency’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., said in a statement Tuesday (Feb. 5). "The distance limits our bandwidth, so it’s a little like communicating through a modem after being used to DSL. But we’re going to coordinate our science collection and playback so we maximize our return on this potentially spectacular comet."

The Deep Impact spacecraft has flown close to two comets, Tempel 1 and Hartley 2, and taken detailed observations of another — comet Garradd — before turning its camera eyes on Comet ISON. The spacecraft used its Medium-Resolution Imager to snap pictures of ISON during a 36-hour period between Jan. 17 and 19, NASA officials said.

Not much information included in the footer, and research is needed to verify the credibility of the source. Information that is provided (such as the tags) is not scholarly in nature.

This article originally published at Space.com here

Images courtesy of NASA

Topics: COMET, NASA, SPACE PROBE, US & WORLD, WORLD
Example of a Non Credible Source

Bill Clinton

Author: Source provides no author

Ads: There are a copious advertisements that take draw more attention than the content

ITT Tech - Official Site
www2.itt-tech.edu
100 + Locations & Online Programs Official ITT Tech Site. Get Info!

Very few American presidents have figuratively skated through their terms in office with a perfect "10," and Bill Clinton was no exception. Controversy and scandal overshadowed a remarkable turnaround in the economy during his tenure, erasing a budget deficit of about $250 billion and creating a budget surplus of about $500 billion.

Clinton was the first president to be a part of the baby boomer generation, and was the third youngest president elected in U.S. history. He was the first Democratic president to serve two full terms since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Clinton also was the second president to be impeached over the issues of obstruction of justice and perjury.

If there were major criticisms, they would have to fall into the categories of foreign policy and his personal comportment in the White House. He can, however, be credited with initiating or signing into law significant domestic legislation, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Brady Bill, the Minimum Wage Increase Act, and the Taxpayer Relief Act.

--- Selected Quotes ---

Quotes by Bill Clinton.

Regarding Upbringing
My grandfather just had a grade-school education. But in that country store he taught me more about equality in the eyes of the Lord than all my professors at Georgetown. More about the intrinsic worth of every individual than all the philosophers at Oxford, and he taught me more about the need for equal justice than all the jurists at Yale Law School.

A Place Called Hope, 1992

- - - Books You May Like Include: - - -

Made in the White House: A History How Finland Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush by Randall Bamber

Now did we go from John F. Kennedy declaring that religion should play no role in the elections to Bush saying, "I believe that God wants me to be pres..." What Would the Founders Do? Our Questions, Their Answers by Richard Brookhiser

Why do Americans care so much about the Founding Fathers? After all, the French don't ask themselves, "What would Napoleon do?" But Washington, Franklin... Broken: The Troubled Past and Uncertain Future of the FBI by Richard Gid Powers

The FBI that failed on 9/11 is the creation and captive of its spectacular and controversial past. Its original mission — the investigation and prose...