Evaluating Online Sources

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Background Information

Although the internet is easily accessible, anyone can post information to the internet. Therefore, it is crucial that you examine the credibility of the author, hosting website, and information provided.
Evaluate Author of Source

Is the author of the information provided?

- If an author is not provided:
  - He/she is NOT taking responsibility for the information provided.
  - You should then evaluate the credibility of the hosting site.

Evaluate Hosting Website

Is the sponsoring host credible?

- Is there an underlying agenda to the information provided?
- Is the hosting website biased?
- Does the sponsoring host have credibility and/or authority on the subject?

For example: The organization website PETA posts facts about animal testing. However, the information provided only shows one side of the issue and is often extreme.
Evaluate Information Provided

Is the information provided consistent with other sources and findings?
- You will want to look for consistency among the information provided.

For example: Do the statistics on lung cancer from one source match up with what you have seen on other sources?

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