

Evaluating Websites : The Get REAL Test

Read the URL:

- What is the base URL (domain and extension)?
- Do you recognize the domain name?
- What is the extension in the domain name?
- What does this URL extension mean?
- What can you tell about the site by simply reading the domain name (without even visiting the site?)
- Is the site sponsored/hosted by a trusted organization?
- Is it a personal page?*
- Is it published using a free web hosting service?*

*The implications/importance of these criteria will vary depending on the topic and purpose.

Examine the content:

- Does the site appear useful for your purpose?
- Does the information appear accurate and complete?
- How does it compare to other resources on the same topic?
- Are sources cited? Can you verify key information?
- What is the purpose of the site (inform, persuade, entertain?)
- When was the site last updated?*
- How has the site changed over time?
Wayback Machine - <http://www.archive.org>
- Are there ads on the page? Does that affect the credibility?

Ask about the author

- Who wrote the site? Do they provide credentials?
- Look for "About" or Google the author/owner. What kind of results do you get?
- Is there a way to contact the author?
- Who owns the site? Check Easy Whois - <http://www.easywhois.com/>
- Does the author seem knowledgeable? Is s/he an expert in the field?

Look at the links:

- What does the page or site link to (credible/trusted sources)?
- Do the domain names change?
- What links to this site?
- Why are they linked?
Use the **Link:**command (search engine of choice).
- What do other sites say about the material/content on your site?

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