

The C.A.R.S. Checklist for Evaluating Internet Sources

You should evaluate every web site you use for research or for personal information. The CARS checklist for evaluating internet sources is listed below. Ask yourself the following questions about each site and try to use only those that have the best evidence of credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support.

Website Evaluation Checklist		
Title of the website: _____		
URL: _____		
<p>Credibility: A source that is created by a person or organization who knows the subject and who cares about its quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a publishing or sponsoring organization? • Does the individual or organization list all of their qualifications, or credentials? Are they experts in their field? • Does the website have an .edu, .org, or .gov ending in its URL? 	Yes _____ _____ _____	No _____ _____ _____
<p>Accuracy: A source with information that is current, complete, and correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the reading you have already done on the subject does the information on the site seem accurate? • Is the website free of spelling errors, grammatical errors, dead links, or other problems that indicate lack of quality control? 	_____ _____	_____ _____
<p>Reasonableness: a source that is truthful and unbiased</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the website avoid advertising that may be in conflict with the content of the website? • If an issue is covered, are both sides presented? • Do you trust the author or organization that has created the website? 	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
<p>Support: A source with verifiable sources of information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is factual information referenced in footnotes or a bibliography? 	_____	_____

Information such as the author, host organization, and publication date will be easily located at either the top or bottom of the page. However, you may need to dig deeper: You can find out about the organization by looking at the URL, especially the domain name (ie., cnn.com, harvard.edu). There are no universal rules for which domain names are good or bad, but the domain name can help you identify the host organization. The information you need might even be on a different page. Try clicking on "About Us" or "Contact Us" to find more information. You can also just enter the domain name without anything past the first slash and see what information you find. (i.e., shorten "virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm" to "virtualsalt.com")