Evaluating Internet Sources for Documentation

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Why have Quality Standards?

- The Internet contains web pages from youngsters as well as world-class experts.

- Just like the print medium, students need to know how to distinguish quality from quantity.

- Standards to determine quality of a source prepares students for college and beyond.

UIL Documentation Standards

- **NO** use of web pages that come from discussion groups.

- **NO** use of web pages that come from chat rooms.

- **NO** use of comments posted on blogs.

- **NO** use of web pages where the author is a student in grade school, high school or college.

- **No** use of Wikipedia.

Preferred Sites

- **Web Pages sponsored by one of the following:**

  - Author's official copyrighted website

  - Government institution

  - Major educational institution

  - Recognized book publishing company

Preferred Sites

- **Web Pages sponsored by one of the following:**

  - Reputable journalistic organization (*New York Times, etc.*)

  - Online library maintained by government agencies, colleges, universities (*Library of Congress*)

  - Recognized online encyclopedia (*not* Wikipedia)

Problem Sites

- IMDb.COM

- GOODREAD.COM

- FREEBASE.COM

- TRUEKNOWLEDGE.COM

- Unauthorized Encyclopedias

Determining Credibility

- **Examine the site**
  - What is the site?
  - Who sponsors the site?
  - Where does their data come from?
  - Click on "About Us" and read their background

Example: IMDb.com

- By clicking on "site index", then "FAQ", then the question "What is IMDb?" and "How do you get your info?", the following is revealed:

- This site started as a hobby project for movie fans

- It is not mean to be an academic record

- Site info can come from "you"

Example: IMDb.com

- Anyone can add/delete/correct info

- There is no citation of the biographical info

- Statement on website: "By the action of sending information to the IMDb, YOU declare that the submitted data is correct to the best of your knowledge."

- Also stated on site: "When site staff is verifying, they state they prefer Internet sources such as Wikipedia."

Things to Avoid

- Don't simply "google" for biographical data and other facts

- Don't just "assume" the site is legitimate

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Have questions?

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