### The ABCD of Website Evaluation: Evaluating Webpages for Research

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<th>What I Should Look for</th>
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| **A**  | • Who is the author?  
         • What are the author’s credentials?  
         • Does the author have expertise in the subject?  
         • Is the author associated with a reputable organization?  
         • Is contact information provided?  | • Websites are created for different reasons: advocacy, commercial, informational, marketing, personal.  
• There are no web standards for who can publish information on a subject.  
• If you can’t determine the author, how do you know the author is a whiz on the subject?  | • Check the top and bottom of the web page for clues.  
• Look at the domain endings, is the site: .com? .edu? .gov? .mil? .net? .org?  
• Is this page linked to a main website for the organization?  
• Look for a page explaining the mission or philosophy.  
• Ask a Reference Librarian about the author/organization. |
| **B**  | • Is the information balanced?  
         • Is it more opinion than fact?  
         • Is the page a presentation of facts or designed to sway opinion?  
         • Is a product, service, or idea being sold?  | • Goals and objectives of the author may not be clearly stated.  
• The web may serve as a place to make someone’s opinion made public.  | • Read through and scan the page to determine the viewpoint.  
• Is there a page explaining who they are and/or their mission or philosophy?  
• Ask a Reference Librarian if the information is objective. |
| **C**  | • When was the page last updated?  
         • Are there any broken/dead links?  
         • Is the information consistent with your knowledge of the subject?  | • Pages with broken/dead links may not be regularly updated.  
• It is important to have some knowledge of the subject to know if the content is out-of-date.  
• Your research may require the most up-to-date information.  | • Check to see if the author attributes information/facts to a particular year.  
• Look at the bottom of the page to see if the author has included a date.  
• The copyright year will tell you when the site license was last updated.  
• Ask a Reference Librarian to verify when it was last updated. |
| **D**  | • Is information documented with references?  
         • Are facts supported with evidence?  
         • If statistics are provided, what is the source?  
         • Is the page free of spelling mistakes or other obvious mistakes?  | • Anyone can publish anything on the web.  
• Unlike traditional print resources, web resources rarely have editors or fact-checkers.  
• There are no web standards to ensure accuracy.  | • Verify that the facts, references, or statistics have an identified source.  
• Do you see any errors or misspellings?  
• Ask a Reference Librarian if the information you have found can be found from a more reliable source. |

**The ABCD of Website Evaluation helps you answer:** What kind of information is the site giving me? How trustworthy is the site? What evidence did I find that gives me confidence in my assessment? Is the information relevant to my topic? Is the site useful for this project/assignment/paper?