

HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET

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Introduction



The internet is a fast way to find information, which makes it a great tool for anyone who is conducting research, either for a paper, a project, a dissertation, or their own personal growth.

However, information circulates on the internet freely and completely unchecked, which also makes it a great way to spread (voluntarily or not) rumors and incorrect facts.

So it is necessary to take several precautions while looking for facts, so as to make sure that your sources are reliable, which will in turn ensure the quality of your work.

In this presentation, you will learn how to:



Find reliable sources

- ▣ Where to search?
- ▣ How to search?
- ▣ How to judge the reliability of the websites?



Use those sources correctly

- ▣ Copyright
- ▣ Fair Use
- ▣ Plagiarism



Part I Finding Reliable Sources

Finding reliable sources: where to search?



There are more search engines than just Google!

Yahoo, AltaVista, WebCrawler, MetaCrawler, Lycos, Ask, are all search engines that are valuable, because they use different algorithms to browse the internet and find websites that relate to your search.

So you can find websites through one search engine that will not appear in another one.

Think of using **metasearch engines**, which will search different search engines at the same time, which is more efficient time-wise and result-wise. For example: www.dogpile.com , <http://vivosimo.com> , www.kartoo.com , www.mamma.com , www.ixquick.com.

Special Search Engines:

<http://www3.ntu.edu.sg/lib/search/specialcat.htm> gives you a huge list of search engines, first by countries, and then by topics.

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/searching/specialized.html> helps you find search engines and sites specialized on certain topics.

<http://www.cod.edu/library/research/searchTools/special.htm> lists, among others, search engines that will locate news archives, search blog entries, scholarly publications and even archived webpages!

Directories:

http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/World_Wide_Web/Searching_the_Web/Search_Engines_and_Directories/Directories/ : many, many more search engines.

For easy reference and access, you can find all of those on NCS's Destiny homepage (<http://destiny.natomas.k12.ca.us/common/welcome.jsp?site=302>).

Boolean Operators

Boolean operators are words that allow you to search exactly for what you need, ensuring better results and a more productive use of your time, since only websites displaying the words you want will be displayed.

- Add words to your search using AND and OR.
- Subtract words from your search using NOT, or the “ - ” sign.

Example: sun AND earth AND distance OR miles

- Use quotation marks “ ” to search words, phrases or names exactly as you typed them.

Finding reliable sources: how to judge the reliability of the websites?

Watch the video:

<http://muse.widener.edu/~tltr/How to Evaluate 9.htm>

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Authority

I can find:

- the author's name, their qualifications, their contact information. It is even better if they have a reputable parent organization hosting their page.
- the publisher: look at what's between http:// and the first / : have you heard of that agency, company or person before? Does the content correspond to the name of the site?
- the purpose: any "About Us", "Philosophy", "Background", etc... that will explain who the author/agency is and what the goal of the page is?

Authority (continued)

- Is it a personal page? Look for a personal name, a ~, a %, or the words 'user', 'member' or 'people'; look at website host/ISP provider's name (aol, geocities, etc....)
- Look at the domain: .gov, .mil = government, .edu = education, .org = non-profit, or country codes = .us, .fr, .au, .uk.

However, these codes can be misleading, as country codes are no longer strictly controlled, profit organizations can get the .org domain, and personal pages can be found in educational websites. So domains can be an indication, but you still need to be careful.

Accuracy



Remember that personal webpages are not checked by fact-checkers or editors, like newspapers, books, or websites of public organizations, agencies or companies are.

Look for pages that will offer links to outside sources which offer a balanced view on the topic.

Currency

- Look for dates (creation, revision), working links, up-to-date information.
- When was the last update? (usually shown at the bottom of the page). If there are no dates, it's best to not use the information stated on the website.

For example:

© 2009: the page was created/updated in 2009

© 2002-2005: the page was created in 2002, last updated in 2005

Objectivity

- Are the facts or opinions stated on the website unbiased, balanced and without conflict of interest (not supported by a company, lobby or group that has an interest in one particular side of that topic) ?

C Content

- Is the piece a well-documented, well-supported article that presents both sides of a topic? Is it a rant? One person's opinion? Is it biased or unbiased?
- If they used information from another source, is it complete, not altered, not fake or forged? Is it retyped (find the original source to see if text was altered)? If reproduced, is there a permission to reproduce and copyright information? Is the link to the original source provided?
- Look at advertising: is it limited and appropriate (linked to the topic of the page and/or from reputable companies)? Rule of thumb: the less, the better.

E Evaluate coverage

- Spelling, punctuation and tone can be a good way to discern:
 - rants: anger language
 - biased opinions: overuse of punctuation, especially exclamation and question marks (!! and ??), use of CAPITALS, *italics*, **bold** and underlined fonts, possible angry or derogatory language.
 - an unknowledgeable source: bad spelling, poor grammar

S Sources listed

- Are there any “links”, “additional sites”, “related links”, etc... that will lead to other reliable websites/sources for documentation? (and/or footnotes or links in the text that lead to other sources) Are the links well-chosen and organized? Do the links work? Is the information given in those links biased?
- Do they list their sources, or are their arguments not documented or supported? If sources are listed, are they reputable?


S Site Objectivity

- In Google or Yahoo, search for “link:(URL)” to see which sites link to that page. Are those sites reliable?
- Use the Wayback Machine (<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>), to see archived pages
- Look up the author’s name or agency’s name on the internet to check their credentials and see what others say about them.
- Why was the page put on the web? Might it be ironic, satire or parody?
- Is it as credible and useful as the resources available in print?



Here is a rubric that gives you simple criteria to judge whether a website is reliable or not:

Dupe Detector:			
A checklist to help surfers begin determining if information found on a website is true or not*.			
Website:		Trustworthy	Questionable
1.	Do large companies you know advertise on the site?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Are there any 'dead links', or links to 'moved pages'?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do the images support the stated facts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Is the site hosted by a credible provider and reside in a 'trustworthy' domain.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Are there links and references to other web sites, resources and experts that corroborate this information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Is the resource available in another format?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Do the site's authors have other publications with credible sites and publishers?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Are the sites authors experts in the subject? (Do they have any credentials or experience around the topic?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Is contact information provided and does the place/email exist and work?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Does the site present highly biased visuals (e.g. racist statements, derogatory remarks, and emotional language)?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Is the site professional (grammar and typing errors are not present or very minimal)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Totals**:			

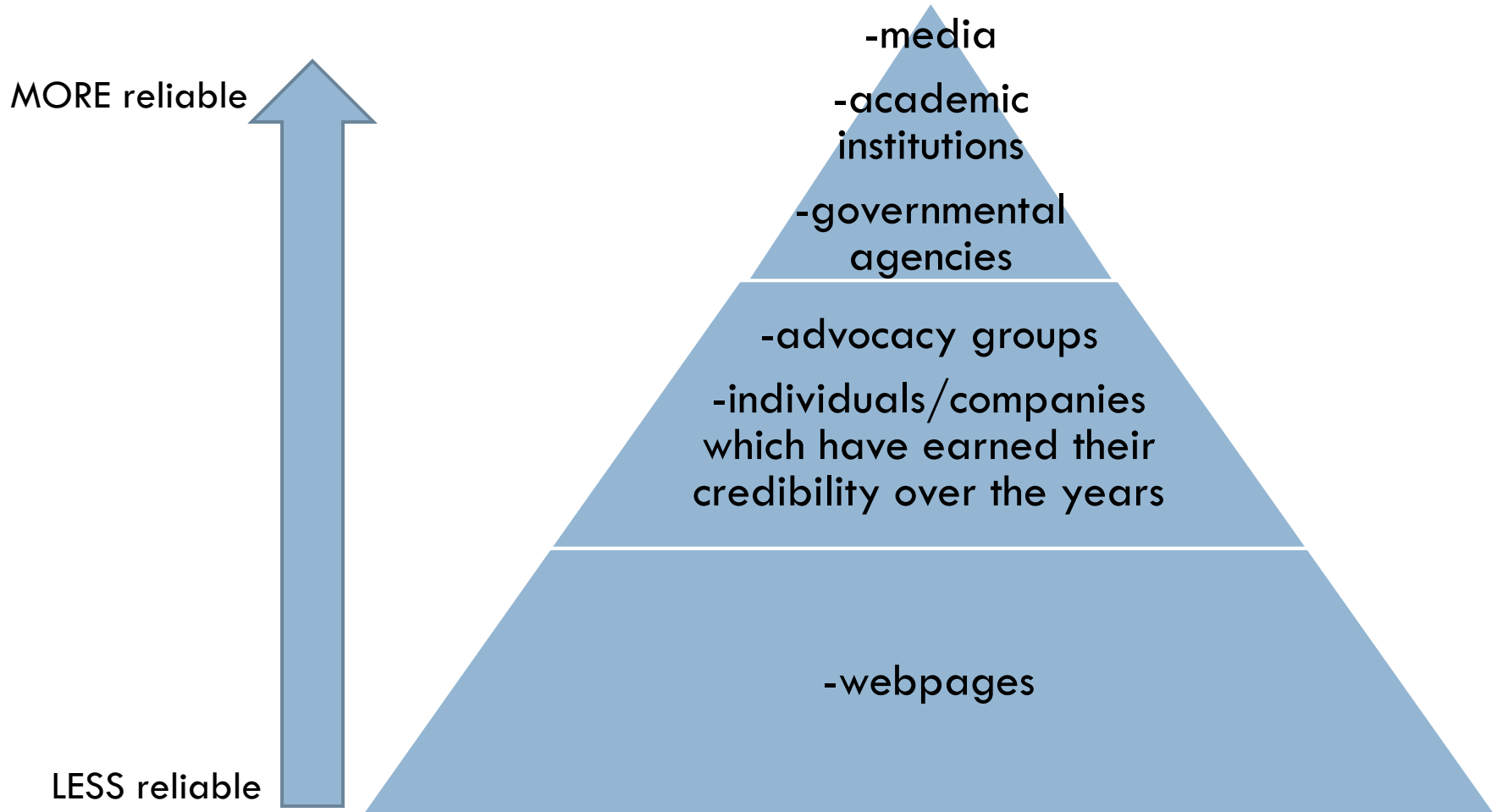
- 
- You can also find a more exhaustive rubric, based on the criteria developed by the Widener University's Wolfgram Memorial Library, on the Natomas Charter School's Library Media Center's webpage (Research Essentials: <http://ss.natomascharter.org/node/24>.)

(Note: I will probably include several rubrics; they are not on the website yet).

Rule of Three

- Always support any information with at least two other reputable sources. If three reputable sources agree on the same fact, there are much better chances that the fact is true than using just one questionable internet source.

Pyramid of Trust





Part II Using Sources Correctly

How to use those sources: Copyright



What is copyright?

Copyright is the right that protects any original work of art so that the creator has the ability to control how the work is reproduced, distributed, performed, displayed or adapted.

How does it work?

Any original creative work is copyrighted as soon as it is created. You do not have to register it anywhere for the copyright to be effective. The copyright is effective for as long as the creator lives, plus 75 years.

You cannot copyright an idea – the work has to be “tangible”, which means that you have to have physical evidence that this original idea for a book, movie, etc... was yours: notes or sketches on paper, on computer, on video or voice-recorder.



How does that affect me?

It affects you in two ways:

- *First, copyright means that even as students, your works (artistic and academic) are copyrighted! No one can use your work without your consent.
- *Secondly, it means that you cannot use any copyrighted work without the copyright-holder's consent.

What is the “public domain”?

Works that are in the public domain are not copyrighted anymore, so the works can be used, reproduced, displayed, adapted and distributed without asking anyone’s permission.

Works fall into the public domain 75 years after their creator’s death, unless the copyright is renewed.

From the Library of Congress /

US Copyrights Office

□ **Does Copyright protect my ideas?**

Actually, copyright law does *not* protect your idea. Instead, copyright protects the tangible expression of your idea or system. Let's say you come up with a new skateboard jumping technique, and you write a book about the trick. The copyright of your book will prevent other people from publishing the text and illustrations describing the technique. But it will not give you any rights to prevent others from using your new jump.

□ **I found old photos in my garage. Do I own the copyright?**

Probably not. You can register copyright in the pictures only if you own the rights to the work, for example, by will or by inheritance. Copyright is the right of the creator of the work or the creator's heirs, not of the person who found or possesses the photos.

□ **If it's on the Internet can I use it?**

Copyright protects text and pictures on websites just like books, CDs, DVDs, and works in other media are protected. You might not see a copyright notice on a website, but "that doesn't mean you're free" to copy what you see or hear.

□ **Is it ok to use up to 5% of someone else's work?**

Under certain circumstances, "fair use" allows you to use parts of someone else's work. There's no magic formula, though. Scholarly criticism, teaching, and news reporting may be valid reasons for reproducing a copyrighted work. A number of other factors also need to be considered. (See [Fair Use](#)). When in doubt, it's always a good idea to ask the copyright owner for permission first.

□ **Can anyone ever use my work without my permission?**

It's always best for people to ask your permission first, but under certain circumstances (See [Fair Use](#)), it's ok for other people to use parts of your work. Usually, parody, scholarly criticism, teaching, and news reporting may be valid reasons for using a small portion of your work.

□ **Do I have to register my copyright to secure protection?**

Copyright protection actually begins at the moment the work is created on paper, recorded, or otherwise made permanent. However, for certain types of works, registration may be a good idea because you get certain additional benefits. Registration establishes a public record, which is necessary if you need to sue someone in court for infringement. If you win your case, you may also be eligible for statutory damages and attorney's fees.

Copyright resources

- Here are some websites which provide resources from the public domain, or explain clearly how you need to cite your sources:

Pictures:

www.everystockphoto.com; www.bigfoto.com;
www.morguefile.com; www.pics4learning.com

Music sheets:

www.gutenberg.org/music; www.ibiblio.org/mutopia

Books:

www.gutenberg.org; <http://download.saclibrary.org>;
<http://www.bartleby.com/>; <http://www.ipl.org/div/reading/>;
<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>

How to use those sources: Fair Use

Copyright infringement is serious business, since you can be sued for it, with **consequences ranging from warnings to fines, to jail time.**

However, the Fair Use doctrine allows some people to use part of a work for specific uses:

“The doctrine of fair use has developed through a substantial number of court decisions over the years and has been codified in section 107 of the copyright law.

Section 107 contains a list of the various purposes for which the reproduction of a particular work may be considered fair, such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. Section 107 also sets out four factors to be considered in determining whether or not a particular use is fair:

- ❑ The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes
- ❑ The nature of the copyrighted work
- ❑ The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole
- ❑ The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work

The distinction between fair use and infringement may be unclear and not easily defined. There is no specific number of words, lines, or notes that may safely be taken without permission.

Acknowledging the source of the copyrighted material does not substitute for obtaining permission. ”

<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

Fair Use (continued)

How does that effect me?

It means that you need to be very careful, at school and in your everyday life, to not overuse an original work, to always give proper credit (citing your sources in footnotes and/or bibliographies), and to secure the copyright owner's approval for anything that would require extensive use of the work, or for any situation where you are not sure of what is appropriate. In the face of possible legal action, it is better to be safe (secure copyright owner's permission) than sorry (be sued).

For proper citation rules, see the NCS Writer's Guide (available online at natomascharter.org), or see this article:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/15/>

For more information, see this video made by the Stanford's Center for Internet and Society: A Fair(y) Use Tale (<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/documentary-film-program/film/a-fair-y-use-tale>)

How to use those sources: Plagiarism



What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is borrowing, copying, stealing another's idea and/or words AND passing it off as your own. So it entails using the concepts and/or language from a particular work (as is or with minor changes), and hiding (voluntarily or not) that you did not create this particular concept/language.

How does that affect me?

It affects you because as students, you will often be asked to do research projects, where you read other people's concepts and words to learn more about a certain topic, and then write about your own point of view. Plagiarism can have severe consequences in the academic and professional world, from warnings to being held back, or even expulsion. At NCS, consequences for plagiarism range from warning, detention, a "0", parent notification or conference, to suspension. (NCS School Handbook, page 7)

Plagiarism (continued)

How do I avoid plagiarism?

There are several ways to avoid plagiarizing a work:

- taking notes** (when you make a note of a good idea or good paragraph you would like to use, remember to make note of where you got this idea or paragraph, so that you can quote your sources correctly) and **quotation**, because a part of plagiarism is making people believe that you are the author. Quoting sources, and using quotation marks around sentences that you are using directly from the work without changing them, does show that you are not the author.
- paraphrasing** and **summarizing**, because the other issue with plagiarism is copying the ideas and words straight from the work. By using your own words, or adding your own ideas to what you have read, you are making sure that what you are writing is new, and not a copy of someone else's work.

Webliographys

<http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/vl/www/wwwprin.htm>
www.ben.edu/resources/librarytour/LibrarySkills/RH102/EvalInternetSpr2004.PPT

<http://www.library.unt.edu/library-instruction/how-do-i-begin/how-to-search-the-internet-1/sources-for-reliable-websites/>

<http://www.delsea.k12.nj.us/Academic/MediaCenter/hs/webevallesson1.htm>

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/greatwebsites/greatwebsitesforkids/greatwebsites.cfm>

<http://www.concord.k12.nh.us/schools/chs/media/webpage.htm>

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/copyrightmystery/#/copyright/>

<http://home.earthlink.net/~cnew/research.htm>

<http://users.mhc.edu/facultystaff/awalter/Brim%20site/index.html>

<http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html>

<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/documentary-film-program/film/a-fair-y-use->

http://plagiarism.umf.maine.edu/what_is.html

www.hbhs.k12.nh.us/library/stuplagiar.ppt

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>

<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm/plagiarism/Copyright%20Infringement.html>

<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

http://plagiarism.umf.maine.edu/what_is.html

www.hbhs.k12.nh.us/library/stuplagiar.ppt

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism_tale

<http://library.albany.edu/usered/eval/evalweb/>