



INTERNET SITES

SEARCHING | EVALUATING | DOCUMENTING

Accessing information via the Internet offers tremendous opportunities and challenges. Three of the challenges frequently encountered are searching, evaluating, and documenting.

Searching for information on the Internet is facilitated by using any number of search engines, indexes, or other tools, often provided by browser software. Some popular ones are Google and Yahoo. Each search engine requires its own search techniques, which are frequently explained within the site. These search tools offer ways to target sites that are closely related to topics of academic interest to Florida Tech students, faculty, and other researchers. Also, the Library website provides easy access to FirstSearch's WorldCat, Internet Public Library, and the Scout Report, all of which index Internet sites that have been evaluated and cataloged.

Evaluating Internet resources is complex but critical to the integrity of research. For a preliminary evaluation, three simple questions can be asked:

WHO

- Who is the author (individual or institutional)? This can usually be found at the bottom of the page or sometimes in a link titled "about the author."
- With what organization/institution is the author affiliated? What information does the site provide about the authors' educational backgrounds, job responsibilities, or other expertise that might qualify them to contribute information about the topic?
- Who published it? Again, this information is often found at the bottom of the page.
- Who is the intended audience? Sometimes an "about" section will detail this information.

WHY

- Why does this resource exist? What is its purpose? To inform? To persuade? To deceive? Other purposes?
- Why is this resource relevant to the topic?
- Is there a bias or slant? It is essential that the user determine if there is a hidden or open agenda.

WHEN

- When was this source published or updated?
- Does the timeliness of this resource matter to its validity?

Additional, more in-depth evaluation guides can be found on the Library website.

Documenting Internet and other electronic resources is addressed in most standard style manuals. In the Evans Library's reference section are located the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (REF LB 2369 G53 2009), *Scientific Style and Format: the CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* (REF T11 S386 2006), and *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (REF BF 76.7 P83). Also available on the Library website is RefWorks, a software program used for bibliographic citation management.