
Finding Quality Information through Critical Evaluation

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Peninsula College Library

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Searching is not Surfing

Surfing is online browsing.
Searching is a systematic effort...
to find good information.
But how do you know if it is good?
How do you find quality information?

By Searching with a Critical Eye

Wherever the information comes from,
it should be evaluated for quality.

First evaluate the **source**,
then evaluate the **content**.

Thinking critically does not mean
thinking negatively. Critique should be
balanced, judging strengths and
weaknesses of the information.

What is the Source?

- **Scholarly** publication?
 - Journal, conference paper, aimed at academics.
 - If scholarly, is it peer-reviewed?
- **Popular** publication?
 - Newspapers, magazines, aimed at general public.
- **Who is the author?**
 - what credentials does the author possess?

Questions to Evaluate Content

- Is the information up-to-date? Does it need to be?
 - Is the information relevant to your topic or research question? Does it present a range of views?
 - Does it appear obviously biased?
 - Biased information is not always bad and may provide a different, useful, perspective. But be aware of bias promoting an agenda.
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More Questions

- Is a bibliography of references to sources provided?
 - Do links work?
 - If it is original research, is the methodology explained?
 - Are the author's claims supported?
 - Is the presentation logical?
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Information from the Web

- is not reviewed or "selected" for quality
- may not be permanent or stable
- may be outdated
- may not be suitable for academic research



**Think critically about
information from Web1.0,
Web2.0 ... and Web3.0.**

Image credit: [Bensheldon](#)

More Quality Questions...

Here is a University of Oregon link to more ways to interrogate a Web page or other source for quality:

Critical Evaluation of Information Sources

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/findarticles/credibility.html>

And a book recommendation:

***The Hidden Web* by Maureen Henninger (UW Press, 2008).**

ISBN 978-0-86840-855-2

This ends the *Finding Quality Information* tutorial.
