

## Evaluating Websites

It is important to be critical of all sources you consult in your research; this is especially true of web resources. Essentially anyone who wants to publish something, advertise something or sell something on the web *can*. It is as important to be as wary of researching online as you would be of purchasing online. REMEMBER: Just because it's published doesn't mean it's good *or* that it's reliable.

### Authority

- Can the author of the page be determined?
- Is contact information provided (name, email, phone number or address)?
- Is the author affiliated with an organization? Or is the author speaking for him or her self?
- Are qualifications or credentials for the individual or organization provided?

#### Good Example:

[http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2013/26feb\\_russianmeteor/](http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2013/26feb_russianmeteor/)

#### Questionable Example:

<http://siberiantimes.com/weird-and-wonderful/news-and-features/news/so-did-a-ufo-shoot-down-the-famous-chelyabinsk-meteorite-last-month/>

### Objectivity

- Does the author have a bias or agenda? (Is this bias stated or hidden?)
- Does the author indicate his or her goal in providing the information?
- Is there a disclaimer included in page?
- "Objectivity" can work closely with "Authority"

Example: <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/oil/>

### Accuracy/Coverage/ Currency

- Is the source of information provided?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the focus of the information?
- What is the depth of coverage of the information?
- Remember that almost anyone can publish on the web

Example: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offshore\\_drilling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offshore_drilling)

### Other things to consider

- Does the presentation appear professional (no typos, misspelling)?
- Is the page easy to use and well organized?
- Do the links from the page connect adequately?
- Remember you can also use library databases like those listed on the first page to find reliable information.

## Resources for Students – Hydrofracking

### What is Hydrofracking, what are some arguments for and against?

Hydrofracking - : “A drilling method called hydraulic fracturing, better known as hydrofracking or fracking, in which large amounts of sand, water and chemicals are injected deep underground at high pressures.”

- A New York Times interactive presentation of how hydraulic fracturing works  
[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/02/27/us/fracking.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/02/27/us/fracking.html?_r=0)
- Associated Press video of individuals both pro and anti fracking  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMboTKOWeAs&feature=youtu.be>
- EPA on Fracking  
<http://www2.epa.gov/hydraulicfracturing>
- Press Release on the Illinois Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act  
<http://www3.illinois.gov/PressReleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=3&RecNum=11278>

### Pro Fracking

Basic arguments: Improves Illinois economy, makes U.S. less dependent on foreign oil

- Grow-IL – a coalition of businesses focused on enacting common sense fracking legislation in Illinois.  
<http://grow-il.org/news-room/>
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce – advocate group for the Illinois business community  
<http://ilchamber.org/?s=fracking>
- Illinois Oil and Gas Association  
<http://www.ioga.com/>

### Anti Fracking

Basic arguments: May pollute Illinois and Midwest drinking water, unknown environmental effects.

- Resilience.org – an environmental group’s article commenting on Illinois’ Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act. <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2013-06-21/illinois-adopts-nation-s-strictest-fracking-regulations>
- National Resource Defense Council – environmental group’s stance on fracking. Try also doing a search for “Illinois Fracking” for more articles.  
<http://www.nrdc.org/energy/gasdrilling/>
- Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing Our Environment  
<http://www.dontfractureillinois.net/>

Galvin Databases:

- Academic Search Premier – good all-around database of magazines, newspapers, and academic journals in all fields
- Newspaper Source – search for newspaper articles