Evaluating Websites

2020

Evaluating Websites

Why is it necessary to evaluate websites?

Evaluating Websites

Because anyone can post anything on the Internet

And they do.
Nothing can be trusted without looking at it closely and knowing what to look for.

The 5 W's

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

Like journalism or informative writing of any kind, be sure to answer these 5 general questions. Keeping these 5 W's in mind will help you find the dependable information you need.

The 5 W's

Who wrote the pages? Can they be considered an expert? Is there information about the author or can further information be found? Are their credentials identifiable and appropriate for your paper? Is a bio included?

Also, who is the intended audience, professionals? The layperson? Adults? Students? Children?

Is it meant for me, a healthcare student, where I am now in my education?

Google the author, then look for a source that you can trust.

The 5 W's

Check the website domain extension following the period of the URL. If it ends in:

.edu – the source is an education site

.gov – the source is a US government site

.com – the source is a commercial site hoping to sell you something

.org – the source is an organization site and may be biased toward that organization's agenda

.

The 5 W's

What is the purpose of the site? Is it to inform/educate or to promote/sell?
Is it objective research or does it have a commercial value or slant?
Is it posted for entertainment? Informative? Determine why this
source wrote it in the first place.

When was the information created and/or updated or revised? Is it
current? Is the date easily found? Is there a copyright or publication
date?

Where does the information come from? Where can you look to find more
information about the sponsor of the site? Is it biased?

Why should this information be used over another website? Is it useful for
your purpose? Does it meet your current needs or goals?

Evaluating Websites

➤ Think of the Who, What, When, Where, Why answers as clues to figure out if the site is worth using.

➤ Prioritize the sites you look at to determine which ones best meet your needs.

➤ Just because a website might show that thousands of people have clicked on it, doesn't make it good.

➤ Use the **PLEASED** acronym tool to remind you what to look for when evaluating a website.

PLEASED

Are you pleased with this website?

o **P – Purpose**

What is the author's purpose in posting this information?

o **L – Links**

Are the links active? Do they work? Are the sites that they link to reliable? Authoritative? Do the creators of this site maintain it?

o **E – Editorial**

Is the information at this site accurate, comprehensive, objective, and current? Who is the audience it's intended for? Professionals, students, children, consumers?

- # A – Author

  Who is the author of the site and are they reliable? Are their credentials easily identifiable and appropriate? Can you find additional information about them?

- # S – Site

  Is this site attractive and the information clearly presented? Too busy? Is it easy to navigate? Do the graphics load quickly? Can you search through the site efficiently? If they're sloppy with their site, they might also be with their information.

- # E – Ethical

  Is it easy to tell if the site is commercial? Is author and developer information in plain sight or do you have to sift through the site to fine it? Is it professional? Is the aim of the site easily apparent?

- # D – Date

  Is the site current? When was it last updated?

Checklist

Copy and use this page as a reminder of what to look for until it's easy to remember.

| ✓	Ask Yourself	Answer or Example
	Is the site relevant to your topic?	
	Is the domain appropriate for your topic?	
	What is the intent of the site?	
	To inform and educate?	
	To sell something?	
	To persuade the reader?	
	To entertain as a satire or parody?	
	Is the site well organized?	
	Is the site easy to navigate?	
	Is the site well maintained? Do the links work?	
	Is the author/publisher clearly identified?	
	Does the author/publisher have appropriate credentials?	
	Is there contact information for the author/publisher?	
	Is the site and its information current/up-to-date?	
	Is the content biased or slanted?	
	Are the references current and related to professional sources?	

From Virginia Commonwealth Universities

Accreditors

There are legitimate agencies that evaluate, accredit or approve websites, particularly in healthcare. Here are two. If you see one of both of these logos, you know that someone has already done your work for you by evaluating and approving the information posted on the site. The site can be trusted.
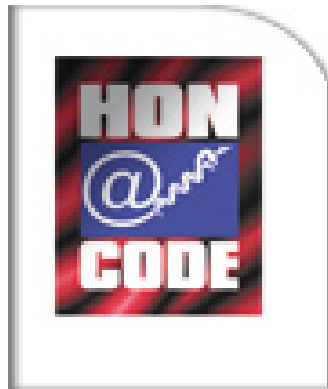
HON was founded to encourage the dissemination of quality health information for patients and professionals and the general public, and to facilitate access to the latest and most relevant medical data through the use of the internet.

URAC was created "to promote continuous improvement in the quality and efficiency of healthcare management through processes of accreditation, education, and measurement."

Do not use:

We have found that the instructors won't accept sites from these sources. You might want to go there to get a basic description or understanding of a topic for yourself, but don't use it in your paper.

WIKIPEDIA

LIVESTRONG™

FOUNDATION

Citing the Site in APA format

There are generally four sections to a website citation.

Who = Author

What = Title

When = Date

Where = Place of publication – website address/URL

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/diabetes-diet/DA00077 | Web Search

File   Edit   View   Favorites   Tools   Help

bing   News   Entertainment   Video   Sports   N/A   Sign in

Patient Care   **Health Information**   MAYO CLINIC   **For Medical Professionals**   **Research**   **Education**

Request an Appointment   Find a Doctor   Find a Job   Log in to Patient Account

Enter search term here | Search | Diseases and Conditions | Symptoms | Drugs and Supplements | Tests and Procedures | Healthy Lifestyle | First Aid

Home > Diseases and Conditions > Diabetes > In-Depth > Your diabetes diet: Exchange lists

Diabetes

Text Size:

Basics | **In-Depth** | Multimedia | Expert Answers | Expert Blog | Resources | What's New

Complications   **3.**
Liver problems   Print   Share
Dehydration
Diabetic retinopathy   ## Your diabetes diet: Exchange lists
see all in Complications

Your diabetes eating plan can help you control your blood sugar level. Use diabetes exchange lists to make sure you're getting a proper mix of calories, carbohydrates and other nutrients.

Lifestyle and home
remedies (20)   The recommended diabetes eating plan is naturally rich in nutrients and low

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Mayo Clinic Wellness Solutions for High Blood Pressure — DVD
Mayo Clinic Guide to Better Vision
Mayo Clinic Guide to Alzheimer's Disease

The Mayo Clinic Diet — Eat well. Enjoy life. Lose weight.

Advertisement

Privacy policy (Updated Nov. 5, 2010)   Terms and conditions of use policy (Updated July 8, 2010)

LEGAL CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF USE APPLICABLE TO ALL USERS OF THIS SITE. ANY USE OF THIS SITE CONSTITUTES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE.

1   © 1998–2011 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. All rights reserved.

HON @ CODE CERTIFIED 10/2009   We comply with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information: verify here.

Citing the Site in APA Format

1. Author: Find the author or responsible person, company or organization. This information can generally be found under the title or at the bottom of the webpage. This example was unusual as it listed it twice on the webpage. Use the copyright owner if a specific author is not named.

2. Date: Look for a specific date. Sometimes it can be found at the beginning of the article with the article title and author. Use the "Updated on" date, if available, or the copyright date.

3. Title: Generally, the title is clear. If there appear to be multiple titles or a title with a subtitle, use what best describes the information that is presented.

4. Website address: Copy and paste the web address from the address window at the top of your browser. This provides the best direct link back to the information. If the information was printed, many times the web address/URL can be found on the bottom of the print out.

Citing the Site in APA Format

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2010).
Your diabetes diet: Exchange lists. http://www.mayoclinic.
com/health/diabetes-diet/DA00077

The colors are for the example only to help identify the different parts needed to correctly cite in APA format. The font color for your citation(s) should be black.

Citing the Site in APA format
Additional Examples:

Author, I. I. (Year). *Title in italics: Capitalize first letter of first word in subtitle.* URL as it appears as a hyperlink from the website, with no period at the end.

Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials. (2007). *CONSORT: Strength in science, sound ethics.* http://www.consort-statement.org/

Bruce, D. F. (2010). *Don't let allergies take the fun out of childhood: Lighten your child's allergy load.* http://www.webmd.com/allergies/_childhood-allergies-8/allergy-load

APA Refresher

If no individual takes responsibility for the page you're using, the agency, corporation, institution or organization should be used as the author.

The URL should be in black.

The URL should NOT be underlined.

If the URL is too long to fit on the line, break it, rather than move the whole address to the next line.

If you are citing an entire website in the body of your paper, you can simply identify the source and include the URL of the website in parentheses within your writing. If you are citing a specific idea, fact, document or quote, you need to create an in-text and reference citation.

Additional Sources
for Help in Evaluating Websites

Cornell University Library; Olin & Uris Libraries (2019). Evaluating web pages: Questions to consider. https://guides.library.cornell.edu/evaluating_Web_pages

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2019). *Evaluating web-based health resources*. National Institutes of Health. http://nccam.nih.gov/**health/** webresources

National Library of Medicine (2015). *MedlinePlus guide to healthy web surfing.* National Institute of Health. https://medlineplus.gov/healthywebsurfing.html

Sheridan Libraries; John Hopkins University. (2019). *Evaluating information.* http://guides. library.jhu.edu/evaluate

University of California at Berkley Library (20189. *Evaluating resources.* http://guides. lib.Berkeley.edu / evaluating-resources