

Evaluating Websites

2021

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

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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?

- **P – Purpose**

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

- **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?

- **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 find 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.

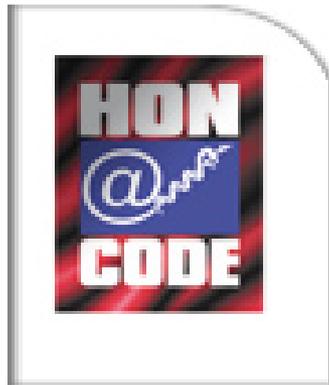
✓	Ask Yourself	Answer or Example
	Is the site relevant to your topic?	
	Is the domain appropriate for your topic?	
	What is the intent of the site?	
	To inform and educate?	
	To sell something?	
	To persuade the reader?	
	To entertain as a satire or parody?	
	Is the site well organized?	
	Is the site 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

Critically Evaluating Websites

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

4.

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

Patient Care

Health Information



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
- Dehydration
- Diabetic retinopathy
- see all in Complications

Lifestyle and home remedies (30)

Subscribe to receive the latest updates on health topics

About our newsletter

2

- Housecall
- Alzheimer's caregiving
- Living with cancer

Enter e-mail

Your diabetes diet: Exchange lists

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.

The recommended diabetes eating plan is naturally rich in nutrients and low

DA00077

May 4, 2010

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1.

Check out these best-sellers and special offers on books and newsletters from Mayo Clinic.

- Try Mayo Clinic Health Letter free!
- 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.

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.

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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, December 4). Evaluating web pages: Questions to consider. <https://guides.library.cornell.edu/evaluatingWebpages>

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2019, October 6). *Evaluating web-based health resources*. National Institutes of Health. <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/webresources>

National Library of Medicine (2015, April 20). *MedlinePlus guide to healthy web surfing*. National Institute of Health. <https://medlineplus.gov/healthywebsurfing.html>

Sheridan Libraries; John Hopkins University. (2021, June 19). *Evaluating information*. <http://guides.library.jhu.edu/evaluate>

University of California at Berkley Library (2021, February 16). *Evaluating resources*. <http://guides.lib.Berkeley.edu/evaluating-resources>