



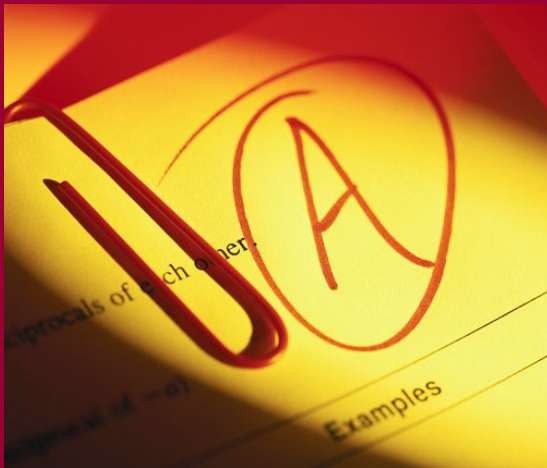
# Social Sciences Inquiry: Evaluating & Citing Web Resources

**Mills Research Help  
525-9140 ext. 22533**

**email/MSN:**

**[library@mcmaster.ca](mailto:library@mcmaster.ca)**

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# Objective: Search Smarter!

1. Search strategies & advanced search tips
2. Google alternatives: other search engines & subject directories
3. The good, bad & ugly: evaluating web sites.
4. Citing Web sources.



# Challenge!

(2 minutes)

search for websites on  
community leadership &  
volunteerism

Hint: Use your favourite search engine!



Let's talk about what you did...

- where did you search?
- what did you type in?

# Search Engines e.g. Google

- What Are They?
  - spider/crawler/robot
  - database of collected pages
  - search software
  - relevance-ranking engine

# Tips & Tricks

## Search engine tips:

- ✓ Phrase searching
  - double quotes
  - e.g. "community leadership"

# Tips & Tricks

## Search engine tips:

- add and subtract: + / -
  - “community leadership” +volunteerism -program

# Tips & Tricks

Search engine tips:

Check out the **Advanced Search** screen, e.g.

- "community leadership" +volunteerism -program
- Date: past 3 months
- Domain: .gov



Let's talk about Web search...

- What's your favourite search engine?
- why?

# Why use anything other than Google...?

- Google doesn't search the entire Web!
- Google's relevance ranking can be flawed
  - Why is [this site](#) the top result in a search for "Martin Luther King"?
  - What's the [top result](#) for the same search on ask.com?



# Why use anything other than Google...?

- Other search engines do some things better than Google:
  - Related searches
  - Expand/narrow your search

# Alternatives to Google!



# Library's Internet Search Page

- go to Library home page
  - <http://library.mcmaster.ca>
- under  **SEARCH** click on the Web tab
- ...and click on [More Web Search Options >>](#) 

# Subject Directories

Why use a subject directory?

- ✓ arranged by topic
- ✓ compiled by people!
- ✓ browse OR search
- ✓ high relevance

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Authority
- ✓ Objectivity
- ✓ Currency
- ✓ Coverage
  - ✓ see original evaluation checklists at [Evaluating Web Resources \(Widener\)](#)

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

## ACCURACY:

- ✓ Are the sources cited/documentated?
- ✓ Can you verify the legitimacy of the information & sources?
- ✓ Who is the author? Does he/she have the credentials to publish on the topic?

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

## AUTHORITY:

- ✓ Who is the author? (are there signs of self-publishing? Blogs? Wikis?)
- ✓ Known in the field?
- ✓ Is there an “about” section that provides more info? (institutional affiliation, education, contact info, etc.)
- ✓ Who links to the site? (check Google Advanced search to find out)
- ✓ What is the domain?

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

## OBJECTIVITY:

- ✓ What is the aim of the author in publishing the site?
- ✓ What's the purpose of the site:
  - ✓ To advertise a service or product?
  - ✓ Political?
  - ✓ Sway opinion?
- ✓ Can you trust the author?

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

## CURRENCY:

- ✓ What's the "last updated" date on the site?
- ✓ Are the information & resources current?
- ✓ Are there broken links?

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

## COVERAGE:

- ✓ Is the content of the site explored in-depth?
- ✓ Are there links to other sites of interest?
- ✓ Beware personal biases!

# The good, bad & ugly: evaluating websites

Challenge:

Evaluate these 2 web sites & decide which is more authoritative:

<http://www.dhmo.org>

<http://www.greenfacts.org>

(3 minutes)

# Citing Web Documents: Minimum Requirements

- document title or description
- date
  - date of publication or last update
  - date of retrieval
- address (URL)
- where possible:
  - author, and author's institutional affiliation

## Example of a Web Citation

- Chou, L., McClintock, R., Moretti, F., Nix, D. H. (1993). Technology and education: New wine in new bottles: Choosing pasts and imagining educational futures. Retrieved August 24, 2000, from Columbia University, Institute for Learning Technologies Web site: <http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/papers/newwine1.html>

# Recap: what have you learned?

- Search strategies:
  - “phrase searching”
  - +/-
- Google’s advanced search:
  - Date
  - Domain
- Why use anything other than Google?
- Why use subject directories?
- Criteria for evaluating web resources

# Questions?

...and don't forget -  
**Need Help? Just Ask!**

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