



## Evaluating Online Sources for AHetc

When evaluating online sources there are a number of questions you should ask yourself to determine the sources' usefulness.

### 1. Who is the author of this web site?

It is important to identify the author of a web site and to become familiar with the author's qualifications. Be skeptical of any web page that does not identify an author or invites you to contact an unnamed "Web master."

### 2. What can the URL tell you?

The URL can tell you if it is a personal, government, educational or organisation's web site. Make note of what sort of web site it is as this can influence how reliable the content is.

Type of organisation	URL ending	Example website
Commercial or personal	.com	<a href="https://www.coles.com.au/">https://www.coles.com.au/</a>
Government	.gov	<a href="http://www.aph.gov.au/">http://www.aph.gov.au/</a>
Educational	.edu	<a href="http://www.monash.edu/">http://www.monash.edu/</a>
Organisation	.org	<a href="http://www.ewb.org.au/">http://www.ewb.org.au/</a>

### 3. Can you tell who the target audience is?

To determine a web site's target audience you must look at the type of language used. Consider these extracts from an online [academic](#) journal and [blog](#).

Academic Journal: "Wardhaugh (2002) presents different views of scholars engaged in researching the matter. Among these, the major ones are: language determines thought and culture; language influences thought and culture; culture influences people's language; language and culture influence each other; and language and culture are not related to each other"

Blog: "Although, as you will notice, it certainly wasn't a flashy haul full of holiday sets and loaded with wow factor. Regardless I went with my needs instead of on impulses and, I got some great products."

Notice how the academic writing is more formal than the blog and the content paraphrases information from other sources? This sort of online source is considered more credible and is the type of source AHetc would like to be used for blog content.

#### **4. How accurate and objective is the content of the web site?**

Before using information found on a web site, it is important to know whether you can trust the accuracy of the facts under discussion. The best way to do this is to corroborate the information elsewhere - through a reference to or citation of a clearly reliable source, for example britannica.com. If you cannot confirm the facts stated in a web site do not trust it, no matter how perfect it might seem for your purposes.

It is also important to understand a web site's point of view or bias. How clear is its purpose? Does the language used suggest a specific ideology, social or political agenda? Answering these question will help you to assess how objective the website is.

#### **5. Are their sources of information cited?**

If you can clearly see the website has cited their sources (either in a reference list or by linking to sources within the content of their writing) they are generally considered more credible than those who don't. However, always check website citations to make sure they have used reliable and credible sources.

#### **6. Is the website up-to-date?**

It is better to use timely and up-to-date sources, out-dated sources are less reliable. So make sure to always check for a publication date!

***WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK THE EDITOR.***