EVALUATING INTERNET SOURCES

Not everything you see online is true. That’s why it’s so important to screen websites before you use them to help with homework or for information in a school report.

Use this checklist to figure out if the online source you’re using is reliable.

**Evaluate the WEBSITE**

- What is the domain? Look at the Web address for clues about what kind of website you’re using.
  - **Reliable**
    - .edu: a school, college, or university
    - .gov: a government agency
  - ? Check carefully
    - .com: a commercial business
    - .net: a network
    - .org: an advocacy group

- Is it easy to navigate? A reliable website will make it easy to find what you need.
- Are there a lot of errors? Spelling and grammar mistakes probably mean it’s not trustworthy.

**Evaluate the AUTHOR**

- Is there an author listed? The author should be easy to identify and contact.
- Is he/she an expert? The author should be qualified to write on this subject.
- What else has he/she published? An author is more reliable if he or she has published other works.

**Evaluate the INFORMATION**

- Is it current and accurate? The information should be up to date and include references.
- Can you find it on other sites? Make sure the information appears in other reliable sources, including websites, books, and articles.
- Is it fact or opinion? Be sure to note when you’re using someone’s opinion and when you’re using proven facts.

**Hint**

Trust your gut! If something doesn’t seem right, it probably isn’t.