

Research Advice

WEB RESEARCH

READ LEFT TO RIGHT (ON HANDOUTS).

GOOGLE IS NOT ENOUGH

- ✘ Search engines only cover an unknown but probably small percentage of content available on the World Wide Web.
- ✘ The priority of display in search results can be misleading, and most researchers are lazy even about clicking!
- ✘ College level research involves more than informational level searching. Ask questions beyond who, what, when and where. Ask why and how. Find sources that are qualified to answer these questions.

ALL WEB SITES ARE NOT EQUAL.

- ✘ College-level research involves new issues for incoming students:
 - + Scholarly communication.
 - + Peer-review.
 - + Citation.

Electronic sources need to be evaluated for their usefulness in writing at the college-level.

GENERALLY SPEAKING:

- ✘ You will probably need to do research that won't end up cited in your papers.
- ✘ Fishing on the Web for quotes and facts is not in-depth research.
- ✘ Your instructors are Web-savvy. Expect that the bar will be set higher than it was in high school.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN WEB SITES:

- ✘ Authority.
- ✘ Relevance.
- ✘ Depth.

Authority is the most important issue, and once it has been established relevance and depth will follow.

ACCEPTABLE AUTHORITY

- ✘ Anyone can have a Web site, and some popular Web sites are of little worth in scholarly research.
- ✘ Private Web sites should always be regarded critically by a researcher.
- ✘ Wikipedia (all wikis) are fascinating and useful, but should be cited in papers only under very limited conditions.

AUTHORITY—THE SITE ITSELF

- ✘ Consider the domain of the Web site. Allow .edu, and .org to take priority over .com in most cases.
- ✘ Check for affiliation. Is the Web site a part of a valid institution—a university, a think tank, a hospital, a professional organization, a headquarters?
- ✘ Is there a visible board of reference? Check for an “About Us” or FAQ menu.

PASS UP.

- ✘ Sites that are clearly the work of one person or maybe a group of friends.
- ✘ Any site with obvious spelling, layout errors and cheesy or over-the-top graphics.
- ✘ Sites with excessive advertising.
- ✘ Unsigned articles which are almost always unacceptable in cited research.
- ✘ Authors without credentials. Seek authors with legitimate degrees (watch for diploma mills), positions, & previous publishing (watch for vanity press publishing.)

RELEVANCE AND DEPTH.

- ✘ Is the authority you have found, an authority on the subject at hand or in a different field?
- ✘ Depth. Some legitimate authorities are not writing to a researching audience—they are writing at the popular level, using laymen’s terms, not citing other research, and not necessarily bringing up sticky and uncomfortable counter-arguments. See the next two slides for other important considerations.

IS IT RESEARCH OR IS IT

polemic ?

- 1 a** : an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another **b** : the art or practice of disputation or controversy —usually used in plural but singular or plural in construction
- 2** : an aggressive controversialist : disputant

• M-W.com

IS IT RESEARCH OR IS IT

Preaching to the Choir?

To commend an opinion to those who already accept it.

'Preaching to the choir' (also sometimes spelled quire) is of US origin. It clearly refers to the pointlessness of a preacher attempting to convert those who, by their presence in church, have already demonstrated their faith.

• <http://www.phrases.org.uk>

ALTERNATIVES TO GENERAL SEARCHING WITH GOOGLE.

Google Scholar

Google Books

Indexes at libraries and organizational headquarters.

- ✘ Aggregators.
 - + This last item includes services like Ebscohost.
- ✘ Open source repositories. (doaj.org/ plos.org biomedcentral.com)
- ✘ Government sites (loc.gov usa.gov)
- ✘ University thesis, dissertation and research repositories. For example, <https://kb.osu.edu>

OHIO WEB LIBRARY

- ✦ Our resident students will want to pay special attention. Other states have similar services.
- ✦ <http://ohioweblibrary.org/>
you will be asked for your Ohio zip code (43029 at RBC)
- ✦ Resources menu at Ohioweblibrary.
 - + Try Academic Search Premier.
 - + Possible strategies:
 - ✦ Choose the full-text option.
 - ✦ Choose periodical or book for literature type.
 - ✦ Consider the article and email it to yourself for closer inspection later.

OTHER AGGREGATORS.

- ✦ If you are not in Ohio call your local public library and ask if your state has a virtual library and how you might join.
- ✦ The following services are costly and are NOT available to the whole public. If you are in another academic library or know other university students in the area, or find yourself on another campus you may be able to access them. They are very useful—
 - ✦ Ohiolink.edu
 - ✦ ATLA

SCREEN SHOTS:

- ✦ The following slides will familiarize you with the Ohio Web Library.
- ✦ Here Ohio residents can find full-text scholarly articles.
- ✦ You can have the full article emailed to yourself, or you can simply print it out.
- ✦ Instructions are in yellow on the following screenshots.