
Find the Clues:

Review top-level domain names for the author/publisher. Listed below are examples of domains:

- .com = commercial
- .edu = education
- .gov = government
- .org = organization (non-profit)
- .mil = military

Some top-level domains are not tightly regulated. A .org website does not guarantee that it is an actual non-profit organization. It is possible that it can be a for-profit organization, a nonsecular organization or an individual. Also, be careful of .edu sites, it could be that a student or instructor is writing on a subject outside of their area of expertise.

When in doubt, seek the assistance of an academic librarian by visiting us online, on campus, or sending us an email.

Check-out these useful links from the American Library Associations guide on evaluating information:

<http://libguides.ala.org/InformationEvaluation>

Primary Sources on the Web: Finding, Evaluating, Using:

<http://www.ala.org/rusa/sections/history/resources/primarysources>

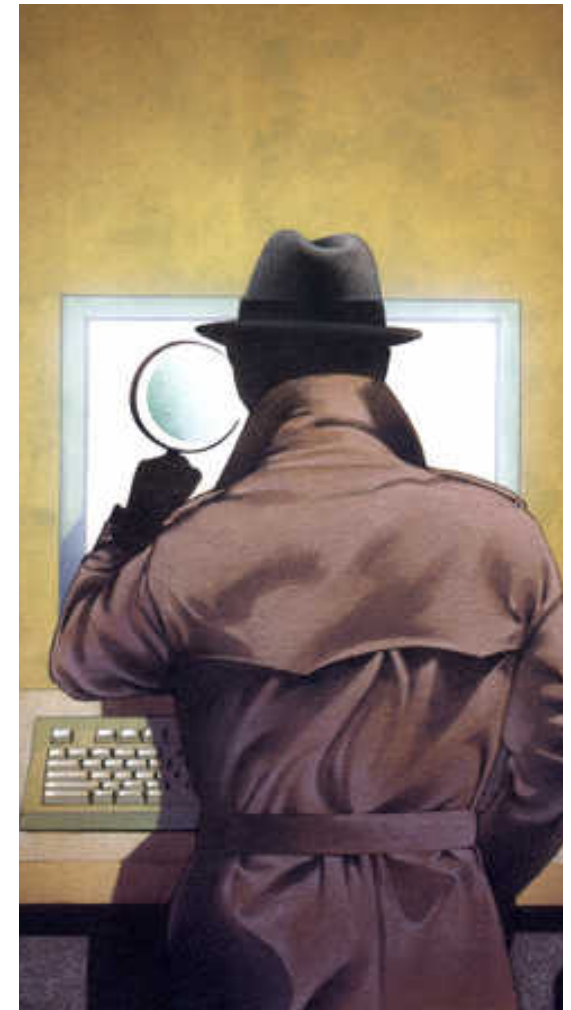
The R.E.A.L. method was created by Educational Consultant, Alan November.

Prepared by Alberto Romero, M.L.I.S.

Web Evaluation

How to Evaluate Websites

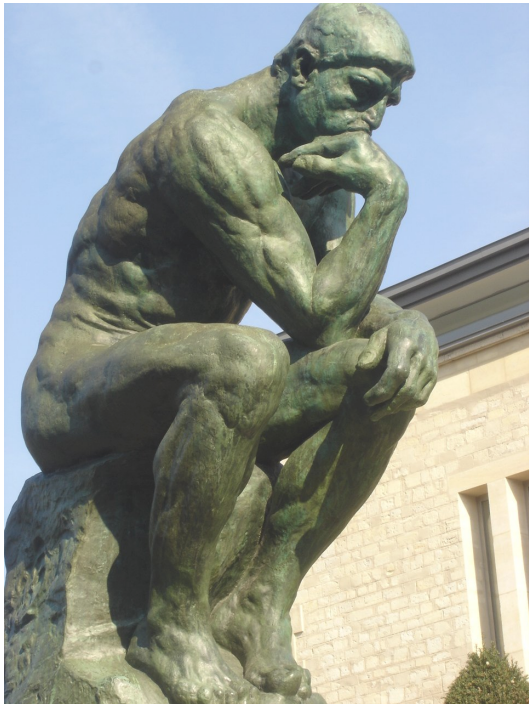
Using **R.E.A.L.**



Why evaluate websites?

The world-wide web offers easily accessible information.

Your job is the discern between good and bad information.



1. **R**ead the URL

- Do you recognize the domain name?
- What is the extension in the domain name?
- Are you on a personal page? (name, ~, %)

2. **E**xamine the content

- Is the information on the website useful for your topic?
- Are additional resources and links provided? Do the links work?
- Is the site current? Do you know when it was last updated?
- Do you think the information is accurate?
- Does the information contradict information you have found elsewhere?

3. **A**sk about the author and owner

- Is the author's name provided?
- Is there a contact person, an address, or e-mail address provided?
- Is there any biographical information provided about the author?
- Does the author seem knowledgeable? Is her or she an expert in the field?
- What kinds of results do you see when you do a search on the author's name?

4. **L**ook at the links

Forward Links - links from the website to a page on another website (hover over the link with your cursor to find out the URL)

- What are the URLs of the forward links?
- Do the domain names change? If not, the information may be biased?

Backward Links - links from another website to pages on the website.

- Who is linked to the website?
- Why are they linked?
- What do other websites say about the material on the site?