Researching on the Web

The World Wide Web is a rich source of information to research many topics. However, websites are not always reliable, so it is the researcher’s responsibility to THINK when using them.

Why is it important to evaluate Internet resources?
- Anyone can publish information on the Internet.
- Only a small percentage of web sources are subject to academic review.
- No standard exists to ensure accuracy on the Internet.

When evaluating web sites, answer questions about the 4 A’s;

1. AUTHOR
   ✓ Who is the author of this site?
   ✓ What are his/her credentials (occupation, position, education, years of experience)?
   ✓ Is the author an expert on this topic?
   
   Tip: If you can’t find answers to these questions, you probably shouldn’t use this source in an academic paper.

2. AFFILIATION
   ✓ What institution, organization, or Internet provider supports this information?
   ✓ What is the viewpoint or bias of this group?
   
   Tip: Look for an “About Us” link or similar information on the web site.

3. AGENDA
   ✓ What is the purpose of this site? Why was it put on the web?
   ✓ What opinions are expressed by the author?

4. ACCURACY
   ✓ When was this site last updated? (The information might be out-of-date.)
   ✓ Are statistics and other facts correctly cited?
   ✓ How does this information compare with that in other sources, such as print sources?