



## Finding Trustworthy Internet Sources

The internet is filled with information, good and bad. Finding the good while avoiding the bad is essential when using online sources for a research paper.

### Trustworthy Domains: .edu, .gov, and Sites owned by reputable companies

- The extension of the website can be very useful in finding trustworthy sources. (Ex: the .com in *www.thisisawebsite.com*).
- .gov sites belong to the government. Sites such as these are considered accurate and trustworthy sources.
- Sites with the .edu extension belong to universities. They are authorized by universities to be correct and have accurate information. Sites with the .edu extension are generally supported by the authority of that university.
- The .org extension is for organizations. Sites with an .org designation are often more trustworthy than .com sites, though the level of trustworthiness varies from organization to organization, and an organization's relevance to a project will also vary.
  - A charitable organization that works in the Sudan may be a good source for research on humanitarian crises in this day and age; an organization that exists specifically to collect statistics on American religion (*www.barna.org*) would typically be a trustworthy source when all a person needs to do is quote such data. However, *www.moveon.org* and *www.gop.org* are both biased sites where political data are concerned.
  - Distinguish between .org sites that provide accurate information for a project and ones that do not.
- The .com extension stands for "commercial" and is a category that includes a variety of information.
  - Do not use just any .com for a research paper. Some .coms are run by very respectable, intelligent people. Others can contain biased, falsified, or completely untrue information.
  - Like .org sites, .com sites vary both in accuracy and relevance.
  - Websites with the .com extension are like most internet sources: researchers need to evaluate each website to determine if it is trustworthy and appropriate to their research projects.

### Scholarly Databases

- Dallas Baptist University makes an invaluable wealth of knowledge accessible to its students through its library (<https://libguides.dbu.edu/library>).
- A scholarly journal contains scholarly information in a given field of study, intended for professionals and students.
- The collection of databases containing information from articles in scholarly journals is probably the single best online resource for research papers.
- Ex:
  - Ebsco's Academic Search Complete, Academic OneFile, JSTOR, and other online library resources are very useful for all sorts of research projects.
  - Archives of the *Dallas Morning News* and other reputable newspapers are available through DBU's database subscriptions.
  - Special Sources are available and listed by academic topic: Business, Communication, Education, Fine Arts, Graduate Research, Health & Medicine, History, Law & Government ,

Literature, News, Psych/Couns, Reference, Religion, Science & Math, Supplemental Sources, and Career Building are the categories.

## **Wikipedia**

- Wikipedia is an online, free, user-written encyclopedia. Due to the ability of anyone to change the information found in any article on Wikipedia, using this website as a source for academic purposes is strongly discouraged.