Finding and using sources

The wide world of sources

- Newsmakers
- Spokespeople
- Experts
- Official records
- Reference material
- Ordinary folks
Using the Internet

A researcher’s dream come true

- You can’t always trust what you find.
- It is no substitute for reality.
- Do some real reporting.
Using the Internet

Webliography

Research & reference
- www.bartleby.com
- www.statelocalgov.net
- www.profnet.com
- www.urbanlegends.about.com

Search engines
- www.google.com
- www.yahoo.net
- www.webcrawler.com

Journalism tips & tools
- www.npc.press.org/library/reporter.clm
- www.newslink.org
- www.poynter.org
- reporter.umd.edu
Using the Internet

XI. Thou shalt not plagiarize

- Quote and credit the source.
- Paraphrase while crediting the source.
- Rework and reword the idea until it is more yours than theirs.
- When in doubt, cite the source.
Using the Internet

Internet search tips

- Try using directories as well as search engines.
- Bookmark favorite search sites.
- Keep keywords specific.

- Study the site’s search syntax.
- Watch spelling.
- Before you link, study the Web site’s address.
Using the Internet

Evaluating a Web site’s reliability

- Authority
  - Sure of the author’s identity, reliability and credentials?
  - Site sponsored by reputable institution or organization?

- Information seem comprehensive and complete?
- Is there a way to contact author or verify or challenge information?
Using the Internet

Evaluating a Web site’s reliability

- Accuracy
  - Does the information originate with the source?
  - Can you verify this information from another reliable source?

- Are there spelling, grammar or factual errors that cast doubt on the site?
Using the Internet

Evaluating a Web site’s reliability

- **Timeliness**
  - Has site been updated recently?
  - Are there publication dates on all pages containing timely material?

- Can you ensure all information is up to date?
- Are the links to and from the pages updated regularly?
Using the Internet

Beyond the basics

- **Newgroups**
  - Online bulletin boards organized by topic.

- **E-mail**
  - Most efficient way to contact experts.

- **Weblogs**
  - Mostly opinion.
  - Writing your own blog can establish dialogue with sources and readers.
Observation

Engage your senses to bring stories to life

- Show; don’t tell.
  - Reporters are eyewitnesses.
  - You are the senses of the reader.