

Learning Resource Center Online Searching Tips & Strategies

1. Online Resources & Research Databases

<http://flelibrary.org/> [library card number may be required]

or

<http://www.lirn.net/accounts/login> [enter code: 33421]

Many large institutions, like the Mayo Clinic for example, have their own database that you can use to research diseases or disorders. By going onto websites of organizations & other credible institutions, you can check to see if they have their own online library. Access to this information is sometimes free. At other websites, access is not free.

2. Using Search Engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.)

Search engines can be helpful for a quick search or for browsing a topic. In order to get the best and most relevant information for your topic, try these tips when entering terms into the search box:

Quotation marks – use quotation marks for a more specific search

Examples: “symptoms of cerebral aneurysms”
“George Washington”
“dehumidification technology”

Plus Signs or AND - use + or AND to add to a search

Examples: “The Depression” + “Dust Bowl”
“Multiple Sclerosis” and symptoms and treatments

3. Evaluating Websites

Authority

Is there an author? Is the author credible? Is the author an expert in the subject?

Is there a sponsor? Is the sponsor reliable?

Is there a link to learn more about the author or sponsor?

Remember – Everyone can publish information on the Internet. It can be difficult to determine if the information is accurate. If in doubt, do NOT use it for your school assignments.

Accuracy/Content

Is the information credible? Is spelling and grammar accurate?

Is the page easy to navigate? Does it have a “search” option?

Remember – there are no Web site standards to check for the accuracy of Web pages. Unlike print sources, there are rarely editors or fact-checkers.

Objectivity

Is the information given unbiased? Is the page designed to persuade, give an opinion, or inform?

Is the page free from advertisements? Are corporate sponsors or owners trying to sell you something?

Remember – sometimes the goals of the author are not stated. Authors may be giving you only part of the whole story or a personal point of view. Advertisements may show that the page is potentially biased towards certain beliefs or products.

Currency

Is the page dated? When was the information last updated?

How current are the links? Have some expired or been moved?

Remember – sometimes web pages are not current, and therefore, they may provide inaccurate information. Be sure to check the dates to make sure your web site contains up-to-date information.