Evaluating Information

Volunteers Needed
For a scientific study
Investigating whether people can distinguish between scientific studies and kidney-harvesting scams.
(Healthy Type-O adults only)
Take one

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In this workshop

- Information sources
- Fake News
- Evaluating (websites)
Quiz

What sources of information can you use in your assignments?

• Go to www.menti.com and enter code 90 50 11
Information Sources Hierarchy

- Peer reviewed journal articles
- Books/reports
- Magazines/Newspapers/Organisational websites
- Personal websites/blogs/wikis/social media
Journal articles

Peer-reviewed articles are considered to be high quality, academic texts.

Very specific in scope.
Peer Review

Peer review is subjecting an author's scholarly work, research, or ideas to the scrutiny of others who are experts in the same field, before a paper describing this work is published.

This ensures that

- quality standards are maintained,
- credibility is assured,
- an academic paper has to meet criteria before it is published.
Books/reports

Can provide comprehensive information on a topic and be particularly useful for students learning about a new field.
Newspapers

Helpful for information on recent events

Not necessarily politically neutral

Articles may vary in objectivity
Magazines

- Industry information
- Trends
- General interest as well as industry specific
- Up-to-date information
- Current awareness
Web pages

• Highly accessible
• Wide audience
• Free! (However much content is behind a pay wall)
• Can be very up-to-date
Evaluating Information

• Learning at University is no longer about acquiring facts and being able to repeat them – we must be able to apply what we know (and are learning) to new situations.

• Evaluating is something you do every day – from checking the weather online to deciding to share a post on social media.

• It is a life skill – you evaluate information at work, in your personal life, and on behalf of other people.
Fake News Quiz

Can you spot the fake stories?
China’s Xi Jinping

2017 was a huge year for China’s leader Xi Jinping. He has had his political thought enshrined in the Constitution, the only living leader to receive such an accolade since Chairman Mao.

More importantly, he has banned Winnie the Pooh from China because Winnie ‘bears’ too great a resemblance to him.

Fake or Real?
The blocking of Winnie the Pooh might seem like a bizarre move by the Chinese authorities but it is part of a struggle to restrict clever bloggers from getting around their country’s censorship.

When is a set of wrist watches not just a set of wrist watches? When is a river crab not just a river crab? Inside the Great Firewall of China of course.

Winnie the Pooh has joined a line of crazy, funny internet references to China’s top leaders.

The Chinese name for and images of the plump, cute cartoon character are being blocked on social media sites here because bloggers have been comparing him to China’s president.
Theresa May

Theresa May secured her seat in Maidenhead in the snap election earlier in 2017.

She had to fend off some very tough competition from….

… Mr. Fishfinger - - Fake or Real?

Fake or Real?
Fake!

In reality, it was Lord Buckethead she had to fight off to win her seat; a self-proclaimed ‘intergalactic Space Lord’.
The new £1 coin came out in 2017, and people across the country bemoaned the fact that vending machines and parking machines wouldn’t accept the new one!

Bank of England employees complained too; their vending machines wouldn’t accept the new £1 coin either!

Fake or Real?
Fake!

In reality, it was their gym lockers that wouldn’t accept the new pound coin.

Talk about irony…
Using web resources

You can use web resources in your assignments:

Government documents
News reports
Organisational reports
Statistics
Blogs

You must check/evaluate them to ensure they are of good quality
URL = Universal Resource Locator


- World Wide Web
- Domain
- Domain extension
- Directory or folder
- Hypertext markup language; the file type.

How the information is transmitted
The file which has the page contents
Web addresses

gov.uk = UK government
ac.uk = UK universities
org.uk or org = not for profit (e.g. charities)
edu = US universities
com OR co.uk = commercial

You can limit results in Google to certain domains using the site command ‘site:’
e.g. site:org.uk or site:ac.uk
Evaluating (websites)

What
- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source?
- Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Who
- Who wrote the website?
- Is there a bias to the information given?
- Is it a personal website or is it hosted by an organisation?
- Are contact details given?
- Are they an expert in their field?
- What are their credentials?
Evaluating (websites)

Why
- What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

When
- Currency (how up to date is the information provided)
- Is a publication date given?
- Has the information been updated recently?
- Is the information up to date enough for your purposes?
Activity

BBC article
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-39526612

Dog Island
http://www.thedogisland.com/

WW2 Tweets
https://twitter.com/RealTimeWWII

NHS Choices
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/
**SHOULD I USE THIS INFORMATION?**

1. **WHAT?**
   - Is it directly relevant to my topic?
     - Yes: Proceed with confidence.
     - No: The internet can be distracting, so don’t waste time reading irrelevant information.

2. **WHO?**
   - Can you identify the author or organisation?
     - Yes: Proceed with confidence.
     - No: If you can’t identify either, look elsewhere for information.

3. **WHY?**
   - Is impartial information required?
     - Yes: Look for sources that present both sides of the argument.
     - No: Proceed with confidence.

4. **WHEN?**
   - Is it sufficient up to date?
     - Yes: Proceed with confidence.
     - No: Check the publication date and if the web site is still being maintained. If it is not current enough, look elsewhere.

5. **USE IT!**
   - (But also consult other sources)
Questions?
Thank you for listening!
Information Sources

Bibliography


