

## Evaluating Websites

Searching the internet is a quick and easy way of finding large volumes of information. However, you need to bear in mind that not all sources are equally reliable or relevant to your study. This is why it's important to evaluate and think critically about the information you retrieve before you use it. Whether you're entering keywords into a search engine or accessing information on a website, bearing in mind the following points may help you evaluate the quality of the information:

### **Before you start**

- Determine in advance exactly what you want to search for
- Choose the main keywords for searching, starting with general search terms then becoming more specific
- Use search engines for locating keywords occurring in the web documents

### **Credibility and up to date**

- What is the authority or expertise of the individual or group that created the website?
- When was the website created?
- Is the website up-to-date? When was it last revised?
- Does the information in the website contradict what you already know, or the information available on other websites?
- What is the purpose of the web site:
  - informational (biased?)
  - promotional (lack of detailed information?)
- Is the web site aimed at the general public or specialized users?
- Does the text follow basic rules of grammar, spelling and literary composition?

### **Top Tip**

**Exercise caution when using Wikipedia. Although this website can be a useful starting point from to give you background information on a topic, be aware that the information may not be as accurate as you might think.**

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