Name: Click here to enter text.

Electronic Communications – Part 2

Critical Evaluation of a Website

**FIRST: Save this file in your login as “YOUR NAME – EC Part 2”.**

**Directions**: The purpose of this assignment is to help you choose and then evaluate websites for their validity. You will research three different types of websites: **Forums**, **knowledge bases**, and articles. You will also learn how to search for websites effectively.

1. **Choose your subject.** Think of a controversial subject that interests you and will have a lot of news articles about it.
   1. **My subject:** Abortion
2. You will now find THREE websites about this subject. One must be a knowledge base, the next a forum, and the next an article.
   1. *Knowledge Base*: A special kind of database for knowledge management. An information repository where information is collected, organized, shared, and utilized.
   2. *Forum*: A forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. Messages are temporarily archived, so it is possible to search old conversations for information.
   3. *Article*:A piece of information by a specific author about a subject. The author has most likely drawn on information gathered from other articles as well as forums and knowledge bases. Articles can be full of opinions as well as fact.
      1. Use your internet tools to search for a page in each area.
      2. Use Google Search Tools and advanced search tools. Search by file type, date, media, etc.
3. Examples – Below are the links to three related sites, all under the topic of “Drug abuse.” CTRL+Click on each link—you will see examples of the three types of sites we are studying.
   1. Knowledge Base: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-abuse-addiction>
   2. Forum: <http://www.soberrecovery.com/forums/substance-abuse/>
   3. Article: <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2012/08/22/many-teens-drinking-taking-drugs-during-school-survey>
4. Fill out the evaluation of each site using the rubric below:

**Site 1: Knowledge Base (Facts) URL: Copy and paste URL here**

Is it a knowledge base?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Y | N |
| Uses facts instead of opinions |  |  |
| Can search for related information |  |  |
| Is like reading an encyclopedia |  |  |
| Is subdivided into sub-subjects |  |  |
| Is presented from an “official” source |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| Is there an “author” listed who wrote the information? |  |  |
| Are the pictures on the page helpful? |  |  |
| Is each section of the page labeled with a heading? |  |  |
| Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated? |  |  |
| Are there photographs on the page? |  |  |
| Does the title page tell you what it is about? |  |  |
| Is there a paragraph on the page explaining what it is about? |  |  |
| Could you have gotten more information from an encyclopedia? |  |  |
| Can you tell if the information on the page is current? |  |  |
| Does the page lead you to some other good information? (links) |  |  |
| **Is the author impartial, or are they trying to push the reader to a certain conclusion?** |  |  |
| Does the author of the page present some information that you think is wrong? |  |  |
| Does the author use some absolute words (like “always” or “never”)? |  |  |
| Does the author use superlative words (like the “best” or “worst”)? |  |  |
| Does the author tell you about him/herself? |  |  |
| Do you feel that the author is knowledgeable about the topic? |  |  |

In your own words and in FULL SENTENCES, explain what makes this site reliable or not, based on the data you gathered above.

Type it Here

**Site 2: Forum (Opinion) URL: Copy and paste URL here**

Is it a Forum?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Y | N |
| Has lots of “threads” with different topics |  |  |
| People can write their opinions in answer to different threads. |  |  |
| Readers have the option to “register” |  |  |
| There is a search bar to find other topics |  |  |
| Posts and comments are dated |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated? |  |  |
| Is the difference between fact and opinion easy to tell apart? |  |  |
| Can you tell how current each post is? |  |  |
| Does the page lead you to some other good information? (links) |  |  |
| Are threads with questions answered by others? |  |  |
| Are a lot of people on the forum getting “flamed” or made fun of? |  |  |
| Are there knowledgeable people responding to threads? |  |  |

In your own words and in FULL SENTENCES, explain what makes this site reliable or not, based on the data you gathered above.

Type it Here

**Site 3: Article (Commentary) URL: Copy and paste URL here**

Is it an Article?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Y | N |
| Is there a specific author? |  |  |
| Is there a date it was written? |  |  |
| Does it express an opinion? |  |  |
| Does it site other surveys, studies, etc to convince the reader? |  |  |
| Is there an obvious source the article was written for? (New York Times, etc) |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| Does the page take a long time to load? |  |  |
| Are the pictures on the page helpful? |  |  |
| Is each section of the page labeled with a heading? |  |  |
| Did the author sign his/her real name? |  |  |
| Did the author give you his/her e-mail address? |  |  |
| Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated? |  |  |
| Are there photographs on the page? |  |  |
| * If so, can you be sure that the photographs have not been changed by the author? |  |  |
| * If you’re not sure, should you accept the photos as true? |  |  |
| Does the title page tell you what it is about? |  |  |
| Is there a paragraph on the page explaining what it is about? |  |  |
| Could you have gotten more information from an encyclopedia? |  |  |
| Can you tell if the information on the page is current? |  |  |
| Does the page lead you to some other good information? (links) |  |  |
| Is the author impartial, or are they trying to push the reader to a certain conclusion? |  |  |
| Does the author of the page present some information that you think is wrong? |  |  |
| Does the author use some absolute words (like “always” or “never”)? |  |  |
| Does the author use superlative words (like the “best” or “worst”)? |  |  |
| Does the author tell you about him/herself? |  |  |
| Do you feel that the author is knowledgeable about the topic? |  |  |
| Are you positive the information is true? |  |  |
| * What can you do to prove the information is true? |  |  |

In your own words and in FULL SENTENCES, explain what makes this site reliable or not, based on the data you gathered above.

Type it Here