

## Finding Information on the Internet

The following directories and search engines listed will help you find the information that you are looking for on the Internet. Remember that some search engines charge a fee to run the search. Also, have a few words that relate to your topic to use when you begin your search; some words may be too broad.

Yahoo! <http://www.yahoo.com> –

- ❖ The best directory for general topics, starts with a general topic and moves into more specific categories as you continue your search

Alta Vista <http://www.altavista.digital.com> –

- ❖ General and detailed searches through the largest web index
- ❖ The user has access to nearly 11 billion words found in nearly 22 million web pages
- ❖ A full-text index of more than 13,000 newsgroups can also be accessed

Excite! <http://www.excite.com> –

- ❖ Tracks down information by searching for concepts, not just key words
- ❖ Can find a specific news article from newsgroups by a text search

InfoSeek Guide <http://guide.infoseek.com> –

- ❖ Returns search hits AND a list of topics related to your search
- ❖ With each search you get the most relevant matches, related topics to explore, and Current news and views from popular magazines, TV networks, and online experts
- ❖ Also helps find email addresses, stock quotes, company profiles, and other materials

Lycos <http://www.lycos.com> –

- ❖ Takes practice and patience to master this search
- ❖ Once you enter a topic, the search will give you a list of hyperlinks to various sites on the Internet dealing with your topic

### **Before looking for your information, there are a number of things to keep in mind!**

Caution #1 – Guard against computer viruses.

Caution #2 – Be conscious of security; don't give out your telephone number, address or password.

Caution #3 – Pay for what you use unless material is clearly freeware or public domain.

Caution #4 – Give proper credit if you find something to use from your search.

Caution #5 – Remember that the Internet does not offer ALL necessary materials – your library is still useful!

Caution #6 – Check reliability; evaluate the source critically.

### **Checklist for evaluating electronic sources and determining bias:**

- ✓ Is there evidence of frequent maintenance?
- ✓ Are there errors?
- ✓ Is the site monitored?

- ✓ Have the best available resources been used?
- ✓ Is there evidence that copyright has been honored?
- ✓ Is the author identified and are his or her credentials given?
- ✓ Do the author and any collaborators have a reputation for being fair-minded, knowledgeable, and well-informed?
- ✓ Does the presentation of the information inspire confidence in its reliability?
- ✓ Is the source located at an institution respected in the academic community?
- ✓ Does the work include citations to other sources or, in the case of hypertext, links to other reliable documents?
- ✓ Does the author acknowledge the fact that the subject of his or her site is controversial, if you know it is?

**Most of the above information can be found when looking at the header and footer of the source.**

- Author or contact person (footer)
- Institution, organization, or company (header or footer)
- Date of creation or last revision (footer)
- Intended audience and purpose of document (body)
- Link to local home page (header or footer)

Don't know how to document a web site? Remember that the APA format requires web sites to be referenced in the text with the URL; they are not included in the reference list. The following examples are for MLA documentation only. Also, a designation like "Home page" should be used if a personal or professional site has no title.

➤ *Scholarly Project*

Author. Title. Publication information for any print version of the source. Scholarly project or database. Editor of the scholarly project or database, if Available. Name of sponsoring organization for the Web site. Access date <URL>.

Scholarly Communications Project. 2 Feb. 1998. Virginia Polytechnic Institute. 24 Feb.1998 <<http://scholar.lib.bt.edu/>>.

➤ *Professional Site*

Site Name. Creation date or update. Sponsoring organization. Access date <URL>.

Philosophy General Resources. 31 Jan. 1998. Factasia Philosophy Resource Hub. 24 Feb.1998 <<http://cybercom.net/~rbjones/rbipub/philos/inter/015.htm>>.

➤ *Personal Site*

Web page author. Site Name. Creation date or update. Access date <URL>.

Hawkes, Lory. Home page. 15 Jan. 1998. 2 Feb. 1998 <<http://home.pages.waymark.net/~hawkes/index.html>>.

Sources used for this handout:

Hawkes, Lory. A Guide to the World Wide Web. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Hodges, John C. et al. Hodges' Harbrace Handbook. 13<sup>th</sup> ed. Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Ryan, Leigh. The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford Books, 1998.

Stull, Andrew T. English on the Internet: A Student's Guide. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.

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