**Source Verification Tool**

**Instructions**

When information is sourced from the Internet and used to answer assessment questions, it is important to verify how valid or reliable that information is and therefore, whether you should use it.

Identify **one (1)** of your proposed sources of information by placing the web link in the cell below and then answer the series of questions to check this information source.

Please note that you are not likely to be marking *‘Yes*’ to all questions. Marking them as ‘*no’* or *‘don’t know’,* is just as appropriate and could be important. Remember it’s the validity of the source that is being judged, not you.

If, after using the tool, you find your source of information may not be reliable please consider not using it.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Content Source/ link** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Where does your content come from:** | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t Know** |
| Is it scholarly? |  |  |  |
| Is the information supported by evidence? |  |  |  |
| Is that evidence referenced by the source? |  |  |  |
| Has the content been peer-reviewed or edited by a publisher? |  |  |  |
| Can the information be verified by other literature on the same topic? |  |  |  |
| Is the tone objective and impartial? |  |  |  |
| Is it free from obvious errors such as spelling or grammar? |  |  |  |
| Is it written by a scholar with expertise in the field? |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who is the author and what are their credentials:** | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t Know** |
| Is the author qualified to write on the topic? |  |  |  |
| Are their credentials visible? |  |  |  |
| Is the author affiliated with a recognised research institution? |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What is the purpose of the work and is it biased:** | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t Know** |
| Why has this work been written? |  |  |  |
| Is the message clear?  |  |  |  |
| Is it clear who the audience is? |  |  |  |
| Is it sponsored? Has a group or company paid the author to make these claims? Consider, for instance, lobby groups, special interest groups, corporate entities etc. |  |  |  |
| Is it biased? Might the author be affected by political, social, economic, environmental, religious, cultural, personal or any other bias? |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What kind of information do you need:** | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t Know** |
| Do you require the most up to date research? |  |  |  |
| Do you want an overview of the body of knowledge of the field? |  |  |  |
| Do you need an historical perspective? |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Is the content appropriate for your needs:** | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t Know** |
| Do you need primary material? What kind and where can it be found? For example, archives, museums etc. |  |  |  |
| Perhaps you are looking for popular opinions on a topic - News, Twitter or Facebook might be useful. |  |  |  |
| Do you need to back up your claims with evidence? If so, scholarly resources are required.  |  |  |  |

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| --- |
| **I DID/ I did NOT include this source of information when answering the assessment questions because:** |
|  |

**Further Information on Sources**

For your research it is worth considering the following domain-name hierarchy as a general guide to the reliability of information (i.e. the sources at the top of the list are more reliable than those at the bottom):

* Education: **.edu**
* Academic: **.ac**
* Government: **.gov**
* Organisation: **.org**
* Commercial: **.com**
* Network: **.net**

***A note on Wikipedia***

While you certainly would not cite a Wikipedia article as a credible source in your research, Wikipedia can be a great place to start to get an understanding of a topic. Its greatest use may be that it can lead you to relevant, resources. Try looking at the at the bottom of each Wikipedia page to begin your search from the references you find there.

Some Wikipedia entries will cite scholarly resources including books and journal articles. You can use FindIt@Flinders to locate these references. If the information in these resources are verified, they can be cited in your work.

**Source: Flinders University**