

Art History

Finding and Evaluating Open Web Sources (updated 2018-19)

Information literacy topics:

- Determining best sources
- Searching strategies for information
- Evaluating sources
- Using technology tools

Objective: To learn to find relevant and reliable open web research sources, to evaluate these sources for reliability, and to use appropriate technology tools.

During class:

Explain objective: To learn to find relevant and reliable open web research sources, to evaluate these sources for reliability, and to use appropriate technology tools.

1. Direct student to activity guide online at:

Amity website→**High School**→**AHS Library Information Center**
Find Online Stuff→**By Subject**→**Art**→**Class Projects** →**Valenzuela**

2. Individual Analysis:

2.a. Student instructions:

Consider a web source. Imagine you are looking for information related to well-known art forgers throughout history.

Students skim this document, from top to bottom, left to right:

Exhibition website: [Intent to Deceive: Fakes and Forgeries in the Art World](#)

2.b. Students respond to this statement, in 3 minutes:

“This web resource has been judged to offer credible information that is appropriate for academic research. Find at least 3 reasons to show that this is true.”

3. Discussion:

Share reasons why this website is appropriate for research (why the information here can be trusted). Categorize students responses under WHO/WHAT/WHERE/WHY/WHEN

Discuss the evaluation criteria:

Evaluation Criteria

-Who created it? Is this person (or organization) a qualified, reputable, expert? Is she **authoritative** (reliable)?

-There are a number of people listed. First is the curator, Colette Loll, who has an appropriate academic background, and experience giving lectures at prestigious institutions. While the backgrounds of the Exhibition Team are varied, there are some with appropriate educational or professional backgrounds, including those of museum curators, and college professors.

The sponsoring organization itself, International Arts and Artists, a non-governmental organization that has received grants from other organizations to promote art and artists. It has a board of trustees, but there is nothing about it to indicate any oversight that might guarantee the integrity of the information it provides. HOWEVER, given that its exhibition of art forgeries is not a socially controversial topic, there is no reason to believe that IA&A has any motivation to mislead.

-What is the information like? Is it **accurate**, giving complete **coverage**, well-written, well-organized? Does it cite its sources? Are those sources reliable?

-This exhibition is well-organized, user-friendly, and straightforward.

Unfortunately, the research material provides no source citations, except for those with the images. This is a serious flaw.

-Where is the information from? Where is the site stored?

-This is where we have to do some investigation. The name of the sponsoring organization itself, International Arts and Artists, sounds good, and it does have a board of trustees, and some academically credentialed people on its staff, but we would need to dig deeper just to make sure that its history is unblemished. In its favor, there is no reason to think that it would have any reason to mislead the public, especially on the topic of art forgeries.

-Why was the information or site created? Was the goal to present information objectively in a balanced way? If it aims to convince, does it address different points of view? Do the presenters have an identifiable political, ideological, or commercial goal that might slant their information?

The stated goal of the International Arts and Artists is to promote "cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts". It has been licensed for a limited purpose by the US Department of State, but most importantly, in this context there is no reason to imagine that it would want to mislead the public.

-When was it created? Is it **current**? (sometimes currency/recent is not important)

This information is not really relevant.

4. Presentation/discussion: Brainstorm and list various search terms that might be used to find sources for this topic.

-Think of key words or common expressions specific to the topic

-Forger, art forger, art forgery, famous

-Think of synonyms: **fake art, art copier,**

-Think of the most important terms: **forgery**

-Think of terms that might sometimes be too limiting: **painting**

-Use "..." for phrases, ANDs, ORs, and parenthesis to structure search

Sample search: **"art forgery"**

5. Student activity

Students carry out individual search for a reliable research site, identifying the following information on this [FORM](#). The source does NOT have to be reliable; all that matters is evaluating it thoroughly.

Evaluation Criteria

-Who created it? Is this person (or organization) a qualified, reputable, expert? Is she **authoritative** (reliable)?

-What is the information like? Is it **accurate**, giving complete **coverage**, well-written, well-organized? Does it cite its sources? Are those sources reliable?

-Where is the information from? Where is the site stored? Remember that just having a page stored in a university does not mean the university backs your information.

-Why was the information or site created? Was the goal to present information objectively in a balanced way? If it aims to convince, does it address different points of view? Do the presenters have an identifiable political, ideological, or commercial goal that might slant their information?

-When was it created? Is it **current**? (sometimes currency/recent is not important)

Conclusion: reliable for your purpose? YES/NO?

Where do I find this information:

-Who -- Look in and follow-up people and organizations in:

About / Contact / "byline" (credits) / bottom of page / sidebars /

-What -- Read and analyze content information in:

Titles / Text / Citations and References

-Where -- Look in and follow-up on site and organization information in:

About / Contact / URL / Domain name

-Why -- Look in and follow-up on author, site, and organization information in:

Text

-When -- Look in:

bottom of page / sidebars / subtitle / "byline" (credits)

Student Instructions

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1. Go to activity guide online at:

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Find Online Stuff→**By Subject**→**History**→**Class Projects** →**Rocco College**
Research→**Finding and Evaluating Open Web Sources**

2. Individual Analysis:

Consider a web source. Imagine you are looking for information related to well-known art forgers throughout history.

Students skim this document, from top to bottom, left to right:

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“This web resource has been judged to offer credible information that is appropriate for academic research. Find at least 3 reasons to show that this is true.”

3. Discussion: Share reasons why this website is appropriate for research (why the information here can be trusted).

4. Presentation/discussion: Brainstorm and list various search terms that might be used to find sources for this topic.

- Think of key words or common expressions specific to the topic
- Think of synonyms:
- Think of the most important terms:
- Think of terms that might sometimes be too limiting:
- Use “...” for phrases, ANDs, ORs, and parenthesis to structure search

Sample search: ***implicit racism america***

5. Practice: Search for a reliable research site, identifying the following information on this [FORM](#). The source does NOT have to be reliable; all that matters is evaluating it thoroughly.