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Welcome to Alternative Basic Library Education.

ABLE Course 10: Evaluating Reference Sources

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Updated by Steve Poppino, August 2009

Our thanks to the Ohio Library Council for granting permission to use portions of the Ohio Reference Excellence Web-Based Training (ORE on the WEB).

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This course is designed for members of the library community who have no formal library training.

In this course you will explore the steps in evaluating reference sources.

Other courses in this series are on the reference interview, basic reference sources, and ethical issues in Public services.

Depending upon your learning style this course will take approximately 1 ½ hours to complete. If you have stopped working on the course, simply re-enter by clicking on the appropriate section in the menu.

After the final survey, you will have an opportunity to print a Certificate of Completion for your continuing education records.

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Course Objectives

In this course, you will learn:

- The importance of evaluating reference resources.
- Criteria for evaluating all types of reference resources.
- Specific criteria for evaluating print resources.
- Specific criteria for evaluating electronic resources.

Click on Section 1. Evaluating Reference Resources to begin the course.

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Click on the next section you need to complete.

Once you have successfully completed all four sections, then click on "Complete Final Survey" and print certificate.

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Section 1. Evaluating Reference Resources

The importance of evaluation -- William Katz (2002) states, "How does the librarian know whether a reference source is good, bad or indifferent? . . . [A] good reference source is one that answers questions, and a poor reference source is one that fails to answer questions. Constant use in practice will help in identifying any source, (whether a book or a database) with one of these two categories."

Of course, an answer is not always THE right answer. You and your patrons will want to check out the authority of the person(s) or organization responsible for a reference source; an authoritative source is the best route to accurate information.

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Another reason to evaluate your resources carefully is to get the best value for your money. No library can afford to spend its budget on materials that aren't useful. Careful evaluation of the resources you purchase will give you the best of the best – a high quality collection, even though small, that meets the needs of your patrons.

If you've done your homework on evaluating the materials in your collection, you are in a much better position to locate the information your patrons need, simply because you will know what you can find in each source.

You will want to learn how to evaluate two classes of materials: those you already have in your collection (so you know how and when to best use them), and those you are considering for purchase (so you know if material will meet your collection development needs). Next we will look at ways to evaluate the materials you may want to buy.

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Evaluating for Purchase

It is difficult to evaluate any print or online resource, if you can't actually see it. You will want to know something about its accuracy, currency, authority, and how easy it is to use. Here are some options for getting that information:

Flyers and catalogs: Chances are good you already receive untold stacks of promotional material from various publishers. These are good sources of information for discovering what is being published and what the content is. Sometimes a sample page or table of contents is included. However, remember these are sales brochures first of all, and the intent is to get you to buy their products. Therefore, while you can learn a lot about the material from these brochures, don't purchase materials based solely on the recommendation of the publisher.

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Bookstores and larger libraries: If you live near a large community, or if you get a chance to visit one occasionally, be sure to take advantage of the opportunity to examine the reference sections at bookstores and libraries. You can examine items that may have piqued your interest because you have seen the flyers. You can also compare similar sources such as dictionaries, thesauri, atlases, or resources on any subject that is lacking in your library. And remember, you can always consult your colleagues – ask them what resources they use and find helpful.

Exhibits: Probably the best opportunity in Idaho to see exhibits is to attend the Idaho Library Association conferences. Vendors, including publishers and distributors, display a variety of resources, both print and electronic. You can examine the books, try out the electronic products, and ask questions of the representatives. Developing good relationships with vendors of reliable publishers can be an effective way to build your collection. An honest vendor wants to earn your trust and will try to help you purchase materials appropriate to your collection. Beware of the salesperson – in person or by phone – who tries to sell to you before listening to your needs.

Reviews: Book (and other product) reviews are essential when making purchase decisions. Some of the best review sources are the journals **Booklist**, **Library Journal**, **School Library Journal**, **Kirkus Reviews**, **Horn Book** (for children's books), and **Choice** (for more scholarly works). All these journals except for **Kirkus Reviews** and **Choice** appear in full text in one of the LiLI databases. (Some of these journals will be discussed in subsequent sections.) The descriptions of materials you find in **Publishers Weekly** are not critical reviews because they come from the publishers themselves. Some library journals contain few or no reviews; a good example is **American Libraries**, an American Library Association publication with news, feature articles, and ads for job openings.

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If you are evaluating print and electronic reference materials for purchase, be cautious. Look for errors. Ask yourself: What will this resource add to our collection? Is it written at a level appropriate for our needs? What information does it contain not found in other sources?

In the following sections you will learn about criteria for evaluating reference sources. After the self-evaluation is a discussion of general criteria for all formats, an explanation of the parts of a book, and then a discussion of criteria for specific formats – print and electronic.

Complete the following quiz to continue the course.

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Complete the quiz.

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Section 2. General Evaluation Criteria ~ Evaluating Reference Sources

There are several things to consider when reviewing reference tools. Regardless of the format, the main criteria to look for are authority, currency, audience, accuracy, and accessibility. Let's explore these areas:

Authority. What is the reputation of the publisher? What are the qualifications or credentials of the author, editor or contributors? H.W. Wilson, National Geographic, and World Book – these names are synonymous in the publishing world with reliability in their field. For example, H.W. Wilson provides high-quality indexing and abstracting services; National Geographic is a leading producer of map products and social science information; and World Book publishes the encyclopedia of choice for most schools. All three publishers are careful in choosing competent contributors and are conscientious in listing the qualifications of each one. If you're unsure about authorities, note the names of

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publishers and editors whose works you like and use; you will soon know the ones you want to rely on.

Currency. Check the copyright date (for books and electronic versions of reference books) or the most recent update (for web sites). For example, does an encyclopedia contain mention of items in the news during the past year or two? Are the newest words contained in a dictionary? Does an atlas use current names for countries? The equivalent of a recent copyright date for a web site is the indication that the site is regularly updated: has it been revised within the past three to six months? If it carries no date at all, be very cautious. Are links still current?

Remember, currency can refer to two different issues: the publication/copyright date or last update; and the currency of the content. Publication date or update is a good general guide, but the real test is, of course, in the content of the source.

A reminder: Not all subjects require equal currency. Scientific and medical information changes rapidly, and the more current the publication date, the better. For example, a year-old *Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR)*, while perhaps not completely up-to-date, may still be relied upon. However, a three- or four-year-old edition of the *PDR* will not include changes in medical knowledge since it was issued. The publication date for works of literary criticism, history and philosophy is much less crucial – Richard Morris' *Encyclopedia of American History* (6th ed., 1982) is useful for all subjects covered up to the date written.

Audience. Who is the target audience? Is the book or web site aimed at students – and if so, what grade level? For example, three well-known encyclopedias are the *Britannica*, *Americana*, and *World Book*. Researching these three will show that *Britannica* is appropriate for senior high to adult readers, *Americana* for junior/senior high students to adults; while, *World Book* is aimed at younger readers but can be enjoyed by all ages.

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Is it for the general reader, or for a more academic or technical researcher? The *New York Public Library Science Desk Reference* is written for the general reader with science questions, while the intended audience of the *CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics* is for professional researchers. Sources like the *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology* may be used profitably by a wide range of readers. In particular, it can be useful for high school students who are preparing school reports.

Accuracy. Are the entries consistent? They should reinforce one another, not offer contradictory information. For example, if you are seeking U.S. population figures, are you consistently finding 2010 census figures, or are some of them from 2000? One way to check for accuracy is to look up a topic you're familiar with to see if the information provided is correct. For example, in examining encyclopedias in particular, you might want to check the entry for Idaho or the city you live in. One way of checking for accuracy in web sites is by checking the links. Do they link to other reliable sites, such as a government site or reputable professional organization?

Accessibility. Is the tool easy to use? Check the book's table of contents and index; given your particular need, one or the other may be the most useful in leading you to the information you want. For example, the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* has a detailed index, as well as a well-organized table of contents, either of which can help you quickly locate information.

The accessibility of a web site can be evaluated by answering the question: Do the web site menu and other design features lead directly to the type of information you need? As an illustration, compare the home pages of [Google](#) and [Yahoo](#). Note the simplicity of the Google site, especially contrasted with the Yahoo site, which contains a lot of unwanted advertising material.

Following the self-evaluation you will find an explanation of the parts of a book.

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Complete the self-evaluation.

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Section 3. Evaluating Print Resources

An understanding of the parts of a book and the purpose of each part is important background for a discussion of the specific criteria for evaluating reference books. This section will present the parts of a book and the next section will cover the criteria for evaluating reference books.

Author

This is the person responsible for the contents of the book and whose name appears on the “title page.” Sometimes there is an editor or compiler instead of an author, and sometimes the “author” is an agency or other group. In evaluating a reference book, you can ask yourself if you are familiar with the author's name and if that person is an authority in the field. For example, a book on astronomy by Carl Sagan would appear to be written by an expert in that subject.

Title

Titles can be very descriptive, telling you quite a bit about the book. Subtitles are especially helpful in this regard. The title, ***Best Encyclopedias: A Guide to General and Specialized Encyclopedias***, leaves little doubt about the content of the book. Not all titles are so helpful, but many can be good clues. Sometimes the title on the spine of the book (back edge) is not the same as the one on the title page -- the page near the front of the book with both the title and author, and often the publisher and place of publication.

Volume

In a set of several books, each will have its own volume number or letter.

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Edition

All copies of a book printed from a set of plates makes up an edition. If additional copies are printed from the same plates, the book has been reprinted. But if any changes are made in the book, either bringing it up-to-date or adding material, it is called a new, revised or second (or later) edition. As a general rule, using the latest available edition provides updated material, so it's wise to check the edition you are using.

Series

A series is a number of separate works -- which are related to each other and issued in succession -- normally by the publisher and often in uniform style with a collective title. Be careful not to confuse the series title and the book title. Boise State University publishes the Western Writers Series, and each title refers to an individual author (such as, **Vardis Fisher**, **Mary Hallock Foote**).

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Place of Publication

The place of publication usually appears on the title page, but sometimes will be found on the “verso” or back of the title page. This can be significant if, for example, you have a book on gardening and it was published in England. You might be alert to advise that the content does not apply to the climate of Idaho.

Publisher's Name

This is usually found on the title page. Like authors, publishers gain good or bad reputations. For example, Merriam-Webster's name as a dictionary publisher generally assures a high quality product.

Date of Publication

The copyright date can appear on the title page or on the verso of the title page. This is one of the most important things to note about a reference book. Is the material still current?

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Foreword or Preface

In the foreword or preface, the author states the purpose for writing the book and expresses thanks to those who assisted in the writing. Knowing the purpose of the book gives you a good sense of the types of questions you will be able to answer with the content. The foreword helps you determine the scope of the book.

Introduction or Instructions for Use This differs from the preface in that it is about the subject of the book. This is a crucial part of a reference book. It often provides instructions needed to understand how the book works. When you pick up a reference book for the first time, be sure to read the introduction.

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Table of Contents

This gives a list of the chapters or parts of a book. You can tell at a glance what material is covered in the book and the order in which it is presented. Reading the table of contents can give you a quick overview of the book and what it can do for you.

Text

This is the main body of the book. Check for the arrangement of the book. Is it alphabetical? Chronological? Is it arranged by subject? What information is included for each entry?

Appendix

This is supplementary or added material that cannot easily be introduced into the text. It is a good idea to become familiar with the material in the appendix since some of the most helpful information is often found there.

Glossary

This is a list of unusual, technical, or obsolete terms with definitions or explanations. It is usually found in the back of a book.

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Index

This is an alphabetical list of topics, names, and other content in a book or group of books, with references to pages or item numbers where they occur. An index is to a book what the online catalog is to a library. It lets you target and locate information. Try to get in the habit of checking indexes. In an encyclopedia, for example, while there may be a major article on Idaho, by checking the index you may also find relevant information on Idaho included in articles on other topics, such as “Basques” or “Salmon River.”

To download a list of the parts of the book, click on attachments in the upper right hand corner of this slide and open the file “Parts of a Book.” Now we will review the process of evaluating a reference book.

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Evaluating Print Reference Books

In addition to the criteria for evaluating reference sources in any format, there are specific criteria to keep in mind when evaluating print resources. Click on each button to further explore the criteria for evaluating print resources.

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Click on the next button to further explore the criteria for evaluating print resources.

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The first aspect to review is the **Scope**. What does the book cover and in how much detail? How complete is it? Are there noticeable omissions? The title should indicate the purpose, while the introduction or preface will explain what the book is intended to accomplish. The table of contents or index lists the subjects that are included.

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For example, ***Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*** is a five-volume set that lists, as a part of the subtitle, “newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television stations, and cable systems.” An examination of the table of contents shows that the first two volumes list publications and broadcast media alphabetically by state, then Canadian province, and within state or province by city. Subsequent volumes include a variety of subject indexes and international information. This is not a directory of international academic and research journals.

The scope of the one-volume ***All-In-One Directory*** from Gebbie Press is similar, but is on a modified scale and includes only United States media. Three color-coded sections organize the book in such a way that multiple indexes are not necessary.

Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory is international in scope. The subtitle indicates the inclusion of “irregular serials & annuals.” The first three volumes list all serials alphabetically by subject, and under each subject by title. The vast majority of entries are for scholarly journals, although general interest periodicals are included. Volumes four and five contain multiple indexes and entries for U.S. newspapers.

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The next item to look at is clarity.

Is the material well-organized and easily understood?

Is the text arranged in a logical sequence, either alphabetically or chronologically?

For example, all dictionary and nearly all encyclopedia entries are organized alphabetically for easy access.

The ***World Almanac and Book of Facts*** includes a “chronology of events” reported month by month for the previous year.

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The *Idaho Blue Book* contains an “Idaho History Chronicle,” with notable events for each time period or year, from prehistory, through territorial days, up to the present day.

Note that any world atlas (such as *National Geographic Atlas of the World*) is arranged geographically, usually by continent and region.

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Another feature to consider is the Index and Cross-References.

How complete is the index? Some reference sources provide a variety of access points; for example, the *TIME Almanac* has three indexes:

- a keyword index
- a section (subject) index
- and a comprehensive index

Do cross-references lead to related subjects and similar concepts?

Are "See" and "See also" references used in the index or throughout the book? “See” and “See also” notations are cross-references that lead you to the correct or additional headings. You will find them in library catalogs, encyclopedias, and a variety of indexes, such as the H. W. Wilson family of indexes and the Yellow Pages of your telephone book.

An index can refer to page numbers (*World Almanac*), entry numbers (*Encyclopedia of Associations*), or table numbers (*Statistical Abstract of the United States*).

The *Encyclopedia of Associations*, a multi-volume guide to more than 22,000 U.S. and international organizations, is arranged by broad subject and subheading, then alphabetically by name of organization. The index to this set is organized alphabetically by organization names and keywords – identifiable by their boldface type. The numbers in the index refer to entry numbers, not page numbers.

Click on the links to further explore these resources.

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What Special Features does the book offer?

Does the book contain extras that add significantly to its value?

For example, the ***American Heritage Dictionary***, like many dictionaries, includes grammar and punctuation rules, foreign alphabet tables, a gazetteer (list of geographic names), weights and measures, and photos and sketches. Additional features might include maps, diagrams, charts, and a glossary.

Are the illustrative materials located near the pages which describe or refer to them? In the case of the ***American Heritage Dictionary***, pictures are in the margins of the text, right beside the corresponding entries.

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Finally, consider the Format.

Do the size, quality of paper, and binding make for a sturdy book that is easily handled?

The two general-purpose almanacs, ***TIME Almanac*** and ***World Almanac***, are available in both paperback and hardback editions. If your patrons use these heavily, you may want to consider purchasing them in hardback for greater durability.

The margins should be wide, the pages should lie flat for easy copying, and the print should be clear and large enough. Two reference books that are difficult to photocopy because of the narrow gutter (margin next to the binding) are the ***Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR)*** and the ***Idaho Business-to-Business Sales & Marketing Directory***. In addition, these books have oversized pages and small print, both of which make producing a good copy more difficult.

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In the case of the *PDR*, there are other choices for information about drugs that would be easier to photocopy. However, there is no print equivalent to the *Idaho Business-to-Business Sales & Marketing Directory*. While photocopying may be an issue, you will not want to avoid a book only for this reason if the information is important for your library.

After the quiz for this section, advance to Assessing Electronic Resources.

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Complete the quiz.

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Section 4. Evaluating Electronic Resources

The technology for presenting reference information changes rapidly. Many print reference sources are now available in electronic format. You will find some reference tools have moved directly from print to the Web, (the Idaho Department of Commerce's *County Profiles of Idaho*) while some electronic sources have been developed specifically for the Web (*Idaho Small Business Solutions*). Meanwhile, others migrated first to CD-ROM and then to the Web (*Statistical Abstract of the United States* - currently available in all three formats).

Reviews of subscription databases and free web sites may be found in all the standard reviewing journals. Remember these resources should be evaluated using the general criteria discussed previously in **Evaluating Reference Sources**:

Authority – reputation and qualifications of author, editors or publisher

Currency – date of copyright and currency of content

Audience – school age/grade level, and, for adults, degree of technical level

Accuracy – consistency and reliability of entries

Accessibility – organization and ease of use

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Evaluating Online Sources

One advantage to online subscription databases and many academic web sites is that, unlike Web resources, they contain no advertising. However, these advantages can be offset by other factors, such as degree of user-friendliness, hardware/software requirements (especially for mapping data), and licensing restrictions for subscription databases.

In the evaluation process, consider the following:

User-friendliness. Is the product easy to install and use? For example, is it obvious from the opening screen how to begin a search? Do the search strategies make sense? Are the help screens clear?

Requirements. What are the hardware and software requirements for accessing and using a database? Which, if any, of your software and equipment will support it? Will your computer's memory handle the demands of the software?

Licensing. Are there licensing restrictions or limitations on the number of simultaneous users? Could you network it, and is there an extra cost for doing so?

Updates. How frequently is it updated?

It is easy to overlook CD-ROMs when books and the Web are so handy; however, there are times when a CD-ROM may contain exactly the information you need or be the best source on a subject at a price you can afford. In particular, many of these are interactive products (often games) and are good learning tools for children.

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Evaluating Web Sites

Remember, anyone can post a web site, but not all sites are created equal. Because no single person or organization controls the content of the Internet, quality varies widely from web site to site. It is extremely important--for both librarians and their patrons--to learn how to evaluate each Internet site.

Use the criteria previously listed for evaluating reference sources:

Authority – reputation and qualifications of author, editors or publisher

Currency – date of copyright and currency of content

Audience – school age/grade level, and, for adults, degree of technical level

Accuracy – consistency and reliability of entries

Accessibility – organization and ease of use

Click on the four buttons to review how responsibility, design, requirements, and purpose also impact the credibility of a web site.

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Click on the next button to review how responsibility, design, requirements, and purpose also impact the credibility of a web site.

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Responsibility.

Similar to authority, look for the reliability and qualifications of the site owner or creator. Who (individual, business or organization) created the web site? Does the site contain an “About Us” or “Contact Us” section if identifying information is incomplete?

As an example, take a look at the **[Official Idaho Travel and Tourism Guide](#)**.

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- Prominent on the top of the home page is a navigation “Contact” button; it links to a screen with the complete name, address, and phone numbers of the site owner, the Idaho Department of Commerce.
- In addition, it provides linked e-mail addresses for general tourism information and all Tourism Division staff members.

Internet Public Library shows how the creator can provide a wealth of information about the site

- Scroll down to read the menu, which prominently displays the web site’s contents in the yellow column on the left side of the screen.
- At the very bottom of the screen, click About the IPL, and you’ll find a statement of principles, criteria for site inclusion, and instructions on how to link to IPL.
- The “Awards and Recognition Received” section gives a good indication of the reliability of the site.

Click the links on this slide and explore both sites. When you are done exploring, close the windows and advance to the next slide.

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Design.

Is the site easy to use or confusing?

To help you find specific sections or pieces of information, does it include a search engine (which functions much like an index) or a site map (which is similar to a table of contents)?

Take the Library of Congress web site – it includes a search engine, a site map, an index, and an advanced search that allows searching through all the Library of Congress web pages.

It is divided into sections for “Resources for... [Special Audiences]”, “Library Highlights”, “General Information” about the Library, and “News from the Library.” It also contains direct links to special resources including

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“THOMAS” (federal legislation) and “American Memory” (digitized collections of American history and culture).

When appropriate, does the web site offer links to other useful sites?

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids teaches students how our government works. It provides a variety of learning tools and links to other federal web sites for K-12 students, parents, and teachers.

Click the links on this slide and explore both sites. When you are done, close the windows and advance to the next slide.

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Requirements

Is special software and adequate hardware required to access the information on the site?

Does it contain large PDF files, which will require Adobe® Reader®?

The Idaho Department of Labor site is a good source for recent Idaho population statistics.

At the home page choose “Statistics” from the menu on the left; then select “Census” for a list of current Census tables. To view all the tables, you will need Microsoft Excel® and Adobe® Reader® loaded on your computer.

News sites and science sites such as C-SPAN and Discovery.com are good examples of sites requiring plug-ins such as RealOne® Player® (formerly RealPlayer©), Windows Media® Player and QuickTime, which are needed to view streaming video. For example, QuickTime or RealVideo are needed to view Nova video programs. Check to see if the plug-ins you need can be obtained free online; most are available and you will find links for installing them.

Click on the links to further explore, when you are done close the windows and advance to the next slide.

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Purpose.

What is the objective of the site?

To provide information? This is the express purpose of the Library of Congress site and other federal web sites.

To sell you a product or an idea? Countless businesses and non-profit organizations have mounted sites on the web in hopes of selling you something.

To convince you of a particular viewpoint? Students use the web to research the pros and cons of almost any subject.

For example, a student searching for information on gun control should examine a range of opinions from sites such as the National Rifle Association and the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

In summary, be critical of information you find on the Web and carefully examine each site. Remember, all sites have some agenda or bias. Knowing the type of site you're inspecting will give you some clues as to its purpose. The top-level domain – the suffix at the end of the web site's URL or address – indicates its source. The following section will give an explanation of top-level domains.

Explore the sites on this page by clicking on the links. Once you are done, close the windows and advance to the next slide.

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Top-Level Domains

According to [Webopedia.com](#), the top-level domain (TLD) refers to the suffix attached to the URL or site address. Being familiar with the TLDs will help you and your patrons understand the site purpose. There are a limited number of predefined suffixes, and each one represents a top-level domain. These are the most commonly used ones.

- .com** - commercial businesses; this is the most common Top Level Domain
- .gov** - government agencies
- .edu** - Educational institutions such as universities
- .org** - Organizations (mostly nonprofit)
- .net** - Network organizations
- .mil** - Military

Click on each of these links to further explore top-level domains.

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.com

This TDL indicates commercial sites created to sell a product or service-- either online, as Amazon.com does, or more indirectly, by describing a product and its benefit to you.

Often the reputable web site owner posts valuable information on the Web as a part of the sales effort (for example, the text of a highly regarded medical source, [The Merck Manual of Medical Information--Home Edition.](#))

The information on a .com site may be excellent or it may be downright false, depending on the integrity and desire for accuracy of the site owner.

Further explore the Merck Manual by clicking on the link. Once you are done, close the window and advance to the next slide.

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.gov

This TLD indicates sites that are primarily products of the federal government. The only exceptions are sites from a few states.

Examples are the Office of the President and the Census Bureau, which is the most comprehensive source of population and socioeconomic statistics in the U.S.

Further explore the links by clicking on them. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide.

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.edu

This TLD indicates a United States college or university.

In addition to admissions information, most institutions include on their sites the school's library catalog, information and databases developed by various academic departments. Academic web sites frequently support faculty and student pages, often indicated by a "~" [tilde]; view these pages with a critical eye because they may support the author's bias or, in the case of students, may be designed to mislead you intentionally.

As more college courses are being taught online, search engines often pick up links to student research papers on .edu sites. These are not likely to be very good reference sources for your customers, except perhaps for their lists of citations to other sites and articles. Also, public school sites often have the .edu label. You may see a link to what sounds like a great report on salmon recovery or Idaho history, only to find that it was produced by 4th graders.

Further explore the university web sites by clicking on the links. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide.

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.org

This TLD designates largely not-for-profit organizations, all of which exist for a purpose. Regardless of your viewpoint, you will find some .org sites beneficial, some offensive, and some value-neutral.

Do *not* assume creators of all sites have your best interest in mind. Find out who is responsible for the site you are examining. If you do not recognize the name of the organization which sponsors the site, look for information about it – on the site itself and elsewhere on the Web, using a search engine – and take that knowledge into consideration as you evaluate the site.

An example of a site that most librarians find useful is ***Libraries Linking Idaho***, for the many resources it offers to you and your patrons.

The official site for Stormfront, a white supremacist group, reflects the opinions of an organization that most people find offensive.

Further explore the links by clicking on them. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide.

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.net

This TLD is assigned to organizations involved in Internet infrastructure activities, such as Internet service providers, web hosting, and domain name registration.

Examples include ***Earthlink*** (a service provider), and ***InterNIC*** (for domain name registration services).

Further explore the links by clicking on them. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide.

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.mil

This TLD is used exclusively by the U.S. military.

It includes the Department of Defense, Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy.

However, the web site for the Idaho Army National Guard is *not* a .mil site, but rather an .org.

Further explore the links by clicking on them. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide.

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Country Suffixes

.us (United States)

.ca (Canada)

.au (Australia)

.uk (United Kingdom)

.gb (Great Britain)

These are examples of the two-letter suffixes used by countries throughout the world. By watching for this type of suffix, you can easily determine the country of origin of a web site.

There are several Internet sites where you can find a complete list of these suffixes, such as checkdomain.com and DomainIt.com. By the way, if no country suffix is included in the URL, you are most likely looking at a United States site.

Within the United States, many states use the same format as Idaho for their URLs – <http://www.idaho.gov>; substitute another state's name for "Idaho" and usually you will pull up the website for that state.

ABLE 10: Evaluating Reference Sources

To access additional sources of information on web site evaluation, click on attachments in the upper right-hand corner of this window. Click on Evaluating Web Sites to open and/or download the file.

Further explore the links in this frame by clicking on them. Once you are done, close the windows to return and advance to the next slide to take the quiz for this section.

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Complete the quiz.

Slide 39

This is the final quiz for the Evaluating Reference Sources Course. If you complete the quiz with an 80% or better score you will be provided access to a final survey which after completing will allow you to print the Certificate of Completion.

If your score is below 80% you may either retake the quiz or review the course content.

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Click on the link to access the course survey. Completing this survey, will allow you to print a personalized Certificate of Completion for your continuing education files.

Be sure to check the attachment “States Recognizing ABLE” to see if your state is on the list of recognizing ABLE as a continuing education credit for your state’s required library certification.

Thank you for taking the ABLE Evaluating Reference Sources course.