

# Finding Information On The Internet

Prepared by Daytona State College Library Services ([www.DaytonaState.edu/library](http://www.DaytonaState.edu/library))

For more information, please call the Research Assistance Desk at (386) 506-3518.

**Search Engines** are programs that allow you to search for information on the Internet. There are dozens of search engines. All search engines provide on-line help and tutorials. Many also have advanced search features that allow you to search for maps, images, video clips, etc. To access the search engines listed below, type the URL addresses below into your web browser.

**The Big Four.** Although there are many search engines, most are directly owned by or based on the indexing of the four major search engines listed below. Each of these search engines are full featured and would be good places to start a research project on the web.

Ask.com	<a href="http://www.ask.com">www.ask.com</a>
Bing	<a href="http://www.bing.com">www.bing.com</a>
Google	<a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a>
Yahoo!	<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a>

**Directory or Subject Guide Search Engines.** This type of search engine differs from the ones listed above in that instead of a computer program analyzing a site and giving you what it thinks you want, these search engines are based on humans evaluating and categorizing websites. Although you will usually have a smaller result list for your search, the sites found are usually high quality.

Internet Public Library	<a href="http://www.ipl.org">www.ipl.org</a>
The Open Directory Project	<a href="http://www.dmoz.org">www.dmoz.org</a>
Yahoo! Directory	<a href="http://dir.yahoo.com">http://dir.yahoo.com</a>

**Question / Answer Search Engines.** Some search engines cut right to the chase and instead of giving you a list of sites, they give you an answer to a question. Although Wikipedia isn't a search engine in the traditional sense, its comprehensive coverage makes it equivalent. However, please note that although comprehensive, Wikipedia is not an authoritative source since all entries are anonymous. It can be used for general reference, but not as a source for a college level research project.

About.com	<a href="http://www.about.com">www.about.com</a>
Wikipedia	<a href="http://www.wikipedia.com">www.wikipedia.com</a>
Wolfram/Alpha	<a href="http://www.wolframalpha.com">www.wolframalpha.com</a>

**Searching the Deep Web.** Even though traditional search engines index millions of sites, this is only a small fraction of the total web. Sometimes called the "Deep Web" or "Invisible Web" these sites cannot be seen by the indexing tools of traditional search engines and you need special tools to search them.

Complete Planet	<a href="http://www.completeplanet.com">www.completeplanet.com</a>
InfoMine	<a href="http://www.infomine.com">www.infomine.com</a>
OIAster	<a href="http://www.oclc.org/oaister/">http://www.oclc.org/oaister/</a>

For many, many more search engines check out <http://www.thesearchenginelist.com/> .

# Evaluating What You Find

Finding accurate, reliable sources of information on the Internet can be a challenge. As a rule of thumb, some of the best information on the web comes from government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. However, all sources should be carefully evaluated before you use them. An easy way to remember how to evaluate information is to apply the **C.R.A.A.P Test**.

## Currency

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of date for your topic?
- Are the links functional?

## Relevance

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

## Authority

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?  
For example: .com (commercial), .edu (educational), .gov (government), .org (nonprofit organization)?

## Accuracy

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

## Purpose

- What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

**If you need assistance finding information on the Internet or any other information, please stop by or call the Research Assistance Desk at (386) 506-3518.**