Chapter Seven

History and the Internet

The word Internet means many different things to many people. Sometimes professors will advise their students not to use Internet sites as sources for their research causing students to assume that they cannot use online scholarly journals.   However, online journals are not the kind of Internet sites they are being warned against.   To be a true Information Literate Historian, then, you must be able to determine which Internet sites are appropriate research sources as well as know how to most effectively find and incorporate them into your work.   There certainly is a great deal of erroneous and unreliable information on the Internet. Yet there is also an astounding amount of valuable historical research material that would not have been available to you as an average researcher prior to the Internet's inception. So understanding what the Internet is, what it does, and what can and cannot be found "on the Internet" is crucial to the quality of your research.

What exactly is the Internet?

The Internet is a network of networks, international in scope, that incorporates email, newsgroups, the transferring of large files, and the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web is the segment of the Internet that provides

the means for the integration of graphics, text, sound, and moving pictures in ways never before imagined. The Internet/World Wide Web's visual capabilities allow archives to put original collections online so that researchers world wide can now see what was formerly available only by taking a trip to whatever local archive housed the collection. More detail is provided in the primary sources section below.

However, the Internet is not a panacea. Inaccuracies, both accidental and intentional, abound. Unlike the review process we discussed in Chapter 4 with journal publications, the Internet has no safeguards to insure that the information included on a web page is accurate and is "quality research." You must act as the discerning editor. This can be especially tough when you are not an expert and may not have the time to do thorough research.   The evaluation tools included in the section below will serve as an important guide as you attempt to determine quality websites from questionable websites and from those intended to deceive.

You will use a browser to access the web. Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla, and Safari are just a few. If you have problems reading a website, it could be that the webmaster did a poor job in creating the site and it can only be read by the particular browser for which that site was created. Don't confuse the browsers, which are just a piece of software, with a database or with the search engines or the search directories discussed below.

How To Read a URL

Your browser "reads" a URL (uniform resource locator) or the address of a website. That's the location of the computer where the web page you want resides. Knowing how to read a URL is essential to understanding where you are on the Internet. A URL looks like:

http://www.dohistory.org

(would need some graphics to diagram here.)

Server of organization where the information is housed	Domain name, in this case an organization. Other common domains are: .edu for education and .com for commercial

http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/writing.html

File or folder name	File or folder name	Actual document -- .html is the language in which the page is written

This particular website is used to illustrate how the past can be pieced together using only the fragments of evidence that have survived. The case study used on this site is that of Martha Ballard's diary. First the subject of a book compiled and annotated by historian Laura Thatcher Ulrich, and later a PBS documentary, the diary, written by Martha Ballard, was originally dismissed by historians as having little value. As you can see by looking at the evidence compiled at dohistory.com, Ballard's personal diary is rich with information about women's lives in 18th century America. The second URL above, leads you to a guide on reading 18th century handwriting. By reading

the URL itself, you will see the name of the website you're visiting, the kind of site it is (.com, edu, .org, etc) and in which particular part of it you are looking. You can actually use your knowledge about a URL's structure to evaluate a website. Later in this chapter, we will discuss evaluating your Internet sources.

How do I Access the Internet?

Most students simply have a favorite search engine that they use, type some words in its search box, and hope for the best. However, there are strategies to Internet searching, just as there are strategies to other methods of historical research. Understanding the Internet and its parts will make your research richer, more efficient, and faster. Knowing the definition and uses of search directories, search engines, and meta search engines will help you select the right tool. Knowing what those web navigational tools do will help you develop other research strategies.

Search Directories

A search directory is a very large, but limited collection of links categorized by a human, usually, but not always, by someone who has knowledge of the subject. The collection is purposely selective and not comprehensive. The inclusion of a link in the directory is generally, although not always, a stamp of approval.   Search directories are useful when you have a very broad topic that you are having problems narrowing to a manageable, definable size. Because they are organized by subject categories, you can do a keyword search within the directory and then discover a subject category and

browse through that category, still within in the directory. This process is very similar to using an online catalog, consulting an expert, or using a bibliography. However, you still must use your evaluation skills. Not all websites, even though they have been selected for a directory, are of good quality or meet your research standards. Follow the evaluation guidelines in this chapter and think about your research needs as you search for online sources.

Search Tips	1. Choose a search directory.
	2. Do a keyword search within the directory.
	3. When the results appear, use the subject headings/subject categories attached to one of the results to browse for other similar websites in the directory.

General Search Directories

➢ **Librarians Index to the Internet** http://www.lii.org
Very selective, but extensive list of about 30,000 quality sites. Not all are history related, but this is a solid place to start looking.

➢ **Open Directory** http://dmoz.org
Billed as the "most comprehensive human-edited directory of the Web", Open Directory has the usual categories. It also has a number of links to directories in other languages.

➢ **INFOMINE** http://www.infomine.ucr.edu
Directory created by librarians from a number of university libraries for students and faculty using the Internet for research. The search interface is a bit different than most, looking much like an online catalog with options to search in author, title, subject, description and full text.

➢ **The Internet Scout Report** http://scout.wisc.edu/
A searchable, weekly newsletter of recommended Internet sites. Lengthy reviews. Not a directory in the true sense of the word, but a good place to begin looking.

➢ **Yahoo** http://www.yahoo.com
The original directory. It is vast, though not approaching the size of a search engine below. There are good finds as well as lots of

junk on Yahoo, when it comes to scholarship. Not as selective as the previous directories above but its organization is good. Use your evaluation skills carefully when using Yahoo.

General History Search Directories
- ➢ **WWW-Virtual Library History Index.**
  http://www.ku.edu/history/VL/
  Massive directory of sites focused on history and covering all eras and countries imaginable. There is no search feature included, so you must browse through the categories. Some marginal sites are included in this site's attempt to be comprehensive. Still, a gem.

- ➢ Trinkle, Dennis A. and Scott A. Merriman, eds. **The History Highway 3.0: A Guide to Internet Resources**. 3rd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2002.
  Huge bibliography of websites organized by country and general subject. However because it is in print, it can become quickly out of date.

- ➢ Trinkle, Dennis A. and Scott A. Merriman, eds. **The European History Highway: A Guide to Internet Resources**. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2002.
  Bibliography of websites focused on Europe, including the former Soviet republics. Some duplication in the "general section" with the "History Highway" above.

Search Engines

A search engine scours the Internet for websites and remembers their locations.[1] A bot or spider crawls out and into servers, the machines that hold web pages, and stores the locations of those web pages in the search engine's database. The spider or bot returns regularly (every month or so) to update its information about the web pages it has found, including their locations. This means that if a page disappears before the spider or bot returns to make updates, you will find a dead link; a non-working connection to the web page

that previously existed. (This also means that there is no archiving of web pages at present. So, unlike documents of the past, little of the Internet historical record is being preserved.[2]) When you do a search, the search engine posts the results, matching the keywords and web pages with URLs related to your search request. In this process, there is no human intervention. The search and the posted and ranked results are all the result of a mechanical process. Traditionally search engines searched only through html pages. Html is the scripting language used to create the traditional web page. Now at least one search engine, Google, also searches through pdf documents (.pdf), excel files (.xls), adobe postscript (.ps), Microsoft word files (.doc), power point files (.ppt) and rich text files (.rtf). This makes more of the invisible or deep web material, discussed above, available.

Using a search engine to its fullest is a bit more challenging than a search directory. Your Boolean logic skills gained in Chapter 4 on database searching in periodical indexes will be useful in using a search engine to its fullest. As a search engine is just another database, the same concepts apply. When you enter your keyword search in the search box, most search engines assume you want both words to appear in the web page, but not as a phrase. To make sure this is the case, you may want to check the search tips section that each search engine provides. For instance the search *Dust Bowl*

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[1] Hock, Ran. A New Era of Search Engines: Not Just Web Pages Anymore. **Online**. September/October 2002:20-27.
[2] For some of the initiatives Web Archiving Bibliography
http://www.ifs.tuwien.ac.at/~aola/links/WebArchiving.html from the Austrian Online Archive.

California, could get you an advertisement for the Merry Maids franchise in California, if they claim to dust your ceramic bowls carefully! A more precise search would be +*"Dust Bowl" +California.* The quotes indicate you want to do a phrase search for the words dust bowl and that the word California must also be in the page. One result would be Dust Bowl Refugees in California (http://www.sfmuseum.org/hst8/ok.html), a website maintained by the Museum of the City of San Francisco. Other search techniques include the use of the word "or" (California or San Francisco) and the use of the word "near" instead of "and", allowing words to be close together in a sentence or paragraph without being a phrase. Some search engines also allow you to restrict your searches to a particular domain. Restricting your search to .edu is sometimes useful, if you think academic websites will provide more authoritative information. Sometimes a .org website will give you an organization's unique view, the United Nations for instance. Each search engine has features in its advanced search that are unique to that search engine. Again, look at the help files linked on the main page of the search engine and decide which tips will be useful for your particular research project.

Your results are ranked by an algorithm that varies by search engine. Google, for instance, has a sophisticated ranking system which combines the number of links a page has on other web pages as well as the number of occurrences of your query words and their location in the web page. (For the technical explanation, see the Google help pages.) Other search engines have

their own techniques. Sometimes, companies can even pay to have their website list higher in a results list.

Each search engine listed below and the numerous others that you may encounter, all have different devices and techniques for searching and creating their databases. It is important to remember to read their search help files to determine their unique features. You should also use more than one search engine when looking for Internet sites. Because each spider or bot operates differently, you will find varied results from different search engines.

Search Tips	1. Use more than one search engine. 2. Use Boolean search techniques such as + and " ". 3. Use the advanced search features and limit by domain, such as .edu or .gov or org. 4. Be as concrete and specific with your search terms as you can. General searches often produce voluminous results that are even more vague than your search..

General Search Engines[3]
- ➢ Google http://www.google.com

- ➢ AllTheWeb http://www.alltheweb.com

- ➢ Teoma http://www.teoma.com
  Since the demise of Argus Clearinghouse, Teoma is now indexing metasites, those large sites with many links and complicated subject organizations.

- ➢ AltaVista http://www.altavista.com

Search Engines For History
Generally there are none specifically for history. Others will cite search engines for historical resources, but technically they are

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[3] For an interesting comparison of search engines, see Greg Notess' web page: http://searchegineshowdown.com. See also http://searchenginewatch.com.

really subject directories with a search engine that searches within that directory.

Meta Search Engines

The concept of meta search engines can be a bit daunting and frankly overkill when it comes to Internet research. Meta search engines search many search engines and directories and attempt to extract the most relevant sites from each. They rely on databases created by the search engines. Generally they create an overwhelming amount of redundant information and are not recommended for your research, or actually any serious research. Still if you wish to try one:

Selected General Meta Search Engines
➢ Webcrawler http://www.webcrawler.com/

➢ Dogpile http://www.dogpile.com/

➢ Webcrawler http://www.metacrawler.com/

Search Tips	
	Meta Search engines use the same search techniques as search engines, so the same search techniques apply.

What am I missing: The Deep Web or The Invisible Web

Because of the technology the search engines use to crawl the web, there are places and types of information that they many not be able to find. Referred to as the Deep Web or Invisible Web, this portion of the Internet is inaccessible by most of the common search engines, which generally only search that portion of the web written in hypertext language, or files with .html or .htm on the end of their URL. A graphic illustration of what you are

missing is available at:

http://www.brightplanet.com/deepcontnet/tutorials/DeepWeb/index.asp.

So, while the search engine may find the existence of a project or a website, it is unable to search within a database. For instance, the Cambodian Genocide Program at Yale University (http://www.yale.edu/cgp/) contains three databases, a bibliographic section, a biographic database, and a photographic database.   Google will list the URLs for the databases themselves, but it will not be able to search the contents of these three databases, which attempt to provide access to Pol Pot's security police archives which document a portion of the 1.7 million Cambodians who were killed in the Cambodian Genocide between the years 1975-1979. Another example of a hidden database in which any common search engine would not search is Northwestern University's collection of photographs on the Siege and Commune of Paris 1870–1871. Doing a search for "siege Paris" would find the web page. However, if you were looking for a photograph of the Chateau de Meudon, contained in the database, a search in any search engine using "chateau meudon" would not find the photographs contained in this site.

   Likewise, periodical databases that are fee based, such as *Historical Abstracts* or *America: History and Life* or an archival database of online scholarly journals such as *JSTOR*, will not allow search engines to index their sites. This is one explanation as to why you will not find journal articles from subscription based journals *freely* available on the web. Not only can the bots and spiders not get to the servers because of the nature of their structure, but

also the particular journals control what is published in their publications and how and to whom it is delivered. Information is not free.

   Other types of information not accessed by search engines include files that are in pdf (.pdf) form, images (.jpg, .gif), audio files (.wav, .mp3, .ra, .au, aiff,), movies, (.mov, .mpg), power point files (.ppt) or Microsoft word documents (.doc). Google, to date, is the only search engine that includes .pdf's in its search results. Some search engines have sections that allow searching for images, audio files, and movies.

General Sites for Searching the Deep or Invisible Web

➢ **Invisible Web** (book companion site) http://www.invisible-web.net/
Under U.S. and World History are a number of links to databases in history. This is a companion site to a published book by the same title.

➢ **Invisible Web** http://www.invisibleweb.com/
Directory of over 10,000 databases, archives and search engines that aren't accessible by the usual search engines. Created by Intelliseek, a corporation in the business technology field. Still sources are very useful. Ironically, this has no relationship to the book and website above.

➢ **Complete Planet** http://www.completeplanet.com/
Searchable access to databases contained in its site.

➢ **Direct Search** http://www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm
Compiled by Gary Price. One of the authors of the Invisible Web book and website listed above has an even larger website with lists of other databases and other sites inaccessible by traditional search engines.

➢ **Internets.com** http://www.internets.com/shistory.htm
History section provides links to some local and national databases.

When is the Internet Appropriate for Historical Research?

If used correctly and wisely, the Internet can be a valuable source for your historical research. Knowing when it is useful and when books and journal articles are more appropriate is the key to being an Information Literate Historian. When is the Internet appropriate for historical research? Carl Smith in his oft quoted, ground breaking article, "Can You Do Serious History on the Web?"[4], answers in the affirmative. He defines serious history, "to mean original work that is responsibly based on primary sources, is intelligently informed by relevant scholarship, and makes a clear argument or group of arguments." If a website meets these criteria, it contains serious history. So what kinds of serious history can be found on the web?

1. **Primary Sources.** Many historical societies, museums, and archives are beginning to digitize parts of their collections and place them online. Sometimes universities, other research agencies, or individual faculty members create a collection of out-of-copyright or primary materials on a subject. For example, *Labyrinth* (http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/) categorizes both primary and secondary materials about medieval life and culture. Other goldmines of primary source, copyright free text information are the *Internet History Source Boo*ks maintained by Paul Halsall (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/). These sites contain links to primarily print texts from Ancient History to present day. The

Internet is especially useful for modern historical primary source material such as video clips and oral interviews. Websites like *History and Politics Out Loud* (http://www.hpol.org/) at Northwestern University contain audio versions of political speeches and include transcripts online.

2. **Bibliographies**. Collections of references to secondary source materials, such as journal articles and books, are widely available. Often, individuals interested in a particular subject will compile lists of references that would take you a lifetime to find. This allows you to build on someone else's collection abilities. If you are lucky, they have an internal search engine or some sort of topical arrangement to facilitate your search. If you are very lucky, you may find some links to full text articles that have no copyright restrictions. For an example see http://www.africabib.org, a site that, among other components, contains three searchable bibliographic databases on Africana Periodical Literature, African Women, and Women Travelers, Explorers, and Missionaries to Africa 1763-2003, compiled by Davis Bulwinkle, Director of the Institute for Economic Advancement Research Library, University of Arkansas-Little Rock.

3. **Organization and Government Documents**. Many organizations have begun to link their current documents to an online page. There are also numerous projects that are digitizing historical documents.   For

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[4] Carl Smith, "Can You do Serious History on the Web?, "AHA Perspectives, February

example, *Eurodocs,* (http://librarybyu.edu/~rdh/eruodocs) while not a site by a government, organizes full text historic European documents, by country. It was established and is maintained by the Western European Studies Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. The *United Nations* (http://www.un.org) makes a large portion of its official documents over a period of the last ten years available through its website. For example, you can find International Court of Justice proceedings against Yugoslavia for genocide in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Croatia as well as Economic and Social Council programs on health.

4. **Specialized Reference Sources.** The Internet's use of hyperlinks makes it an ideal vehicle for reference sources. Definitions and longer articles of explanation on topics that can be too specialized to be published in book form or that can be enhanced by multimedia are easily accessed via the Internet. For an example see the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History (http://ech.cwru.edu/). In this encyclopedia you will find images and historical information about Cleveland, Ohio. All of this would be of great interest to local historians in the Midwest, but not to the rest of the United States.   Remember to be careful of out of date resources. Until recently, the edition of Roget's Thesaurus that Bartelby.com supplied was published in 1901.

1998. available at http://gmu.edu/assetts.historyessays/e1/serioushistoryp.html.

5. **Cutting edge secondary source research**. Historians and the practice of history have an element of discussion and exchange of ideas. Historians usually talk to each other to work out theories they have devised based on their research. At the *Center for History and the New Media* (http://chnm.gmu.edu/index1.html), sometimes papers are posted with the author soliciting comments from his or her readers. In the same way, some of the chatter on the h-net series of listserv groups cites cutting edge, new research. What the Internet will not provide, generally, is a published, refereed journal article or book. While free academic or refereed journals are growing in number on the Internet, usually access requires a paid subscription. As we've discussed above, the search engines will not search in a fee-restricted database, which is what an online journal is.   As we have discussed in Chapter 3 on journals, these sources go through an editorial process to ensure quality control, which the Internet does not generally provide. For a list of online History journals, some free, some subscription, see http://www.history-journals.de/articles/index.html.

6. **Syllabi**. Sometimes *online* course syllabi can be useful. Other professors will have created specialized guides for their students to use in a course similar to yours. Be very careful to evaluate your source. Make sure that the person writing the document has some sort of authority and isn't just a student like you completing an assignment. Generally websites created by students are unreliable. You can't judge quality if

you don't yet know much about the subject you are studying. Be

cautious using syllabi and the documents linked to them as a source. For

example see the online American History survey, *History Matters*

(http://historymatters.gmu.edu/) for an example, not only of an online

course and the integration of multimedia into the basic American

civilization course, but also see the section titled "syllabus central"

which adds links to others teaching online history courses. There you

may find examples of other syllabi that have web pages that might

provide explanatory material for your research.

Finding Primary Resources on the Internet

Using the information above you will be well placed to search the

Internet for both secondary and primary sources. However, for primary source

material there are some additional considerations that should be taken into

account. A wide range of primary source material exists on the Internet.

These sources range from simple scanned images or a collection of oral

histories from a local historical society *(Shema, Arizona Jewish Historical

Society* http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/shema/shema.html) to an elaborate museum

exhibit (*Colonial Williamsburg* at http://www.history.org/history), from a

collection of an individual's papers (*Thomas Jefferson's Papers*

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mtjhtml/mtjhome.html) or group's

documents (*European Union* http://europa.eu.int/)to a selection of primary

sources from a given time period (*Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive*

http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/) or region/country (*American Memory*:

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html). All of these sites are

invaluable to a researcher. There are, however, some issues to consider when

using them in your research. The issue of completeness is always a concern.

When you view a collection online, you have no idea what might be omitted by

those who have constructed the collection. Digitizing an online collection is

costly both in human time and in computer (server) space so items may be left

out. If you were working with a box of individual manuscripts, you would make

the decision as to what was important and unimportant. The well meaning

individuals doing the scanning may clean up a scanned image for readability

and destroy the historical integrity of the original, including some peripheral

marks which may offer clues to its significance. High quality collections will

offer the original scanned image along with an electronically enhanced image.

Some basic sites that have extensive lists of primary source materials online

are listed at the end of this chapter. These collections often include guides

that compensate for the fact that, in many cases, they only offer a selection of

a larger collection. This allows you to get a sense of the collection as a whole,

even if only a small part is available for viewing.

Searching for Primary Sources

Searching for primary sources on the Internet can be as challenging as

searching for primary sources in print, except that the number of places to

search is somewhat centralized. The best strategy is to use one of the

academic search directories listed above to find a specialized website that might include primary sources among its contents. Your next step would be to use several of the search engines to find a website that contains your primary source material. As already discussed, search engines gather information from the web differently, so your results may differ from search engine to search engine. In general, once you are using a search engine you should search in as specific and concrete terms as you can. For instance it is not ideal to enter broad search words such as photographs and imperialism. Rather, you should search for "Britain or British or England and India and empire". If you wanted photographs, you could add the word photographs or use the advanced search in Google or one of the other search engines that support image searches and do an image search or search for files that have an extension of .jpg or .gif. If you are looking for the Treaty of Greenville, then type in that title. If you are looking for a specific form of primary source, an oral history for instance, incorporate that term into your search. The Internet will often use more common language, unlike the online catalog previously discussed which uses controlled vocabulary, or standard subject terms. While you may be able to guess at the searching terminology on the Internet, unlike the online catalog and other indexes, there is no guarantee others are using the same words.

Search Tips	1. Use specific and concrete search terms. 2. Use the advanced search features to search for images or to exclude words. 3. Type in specific titles of documents and speeches.

Searching For Images

Searching for images on the Internet can be frustrating and time consuming. Copyright is also an issue that will be discussed in a later chapter. Some of the search engines listed above do search for images. Look for a button or special section for image searching. The libraries at the State University of New York, Albany have a nice guide to search engines that will lead you to other search engines that are useful for image searching. (http://library.albany.edu/internet/choose.html). Be mindful that many of these search engines do not search only for historical images, so you will also get contemporary results as well.

When you search for an image, just as when searching for any primary source, you must use specific concrete search terms. You are in essence looking for the graphic representation of an object, an image. When you enter your search, look for that image. For instance, if you are looking for images of African Americans in the military, think of specific instances of their participation in the American military and search the terms, for example, Tuskegee airmen, or Buffalo soldiers. This requires you to know something about your topic before you begin seriously searching for images.   A very vague search will often produce overwhelming numbers of results that are too tedious to sort through.   Remember, too, that images can be altered. You must use what you know about your subject to make sure that your photograph is historically accurate. A revealing way in which photographs were purposely

altered for propaganda by the former Soviet Union can be seen at the Newseum's online exhibit, The Commisar Vanishes. If Stalin wanted someone to disappear, or a political message to appear, the photograph was just changed (and individuals just disappeared, as in killed, as well). See: http://www.newseum.org/berlinwall/commissar_vanishes.

Historians Communicating: Using H-Net as Information

Another very important Internet tool for the professional historian, which you can tap into as a researcher, are listservs or discussion lists. Until now, the casual, but public conversations of professionals were unrecorded. Historians know a lot, and as we have already discussed in earlier chapters, the nature of history is discourse, discussion of ideas based on evidence. H-Net is a series of specialized discussion lists where specialists discuss and query and provide answers to questions in the humanities. There is bound to be a discussion list for whatever area of history you are researching. These lists represent the cutting edge of research and will often include information that is impossible to find elsewhere. If you are serious about becoming an historian, join a list. This is where you will make professional contacts as well as see trends in the discipline. If you are struggling with an advanced history project and have already talked with your professor and your local librarian, you may wish to post a query to the appropriate list. To find a discussion list to join see: http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/.

Evaluating Resources

The process of evaluating websites is not entirely different from the process of evaluating print secondary sources discussed in Chapter 5. You still must consider the author's credentials, the accuracy, and the currency of the information. In addition, for websites you must consider the readability as well as certain navigation issues. Below is a basic checklist that will help you evaluate Internet material. There are numerous variations on these criteria. Your library may even have a set they prefer you to use.

Evaluation Of Websites

General websites

The criteria listed below are generally accepted criteria that are based on two excellent guides developed by Ester Grassian, Librarian at UCLA.[5]

> ➢ **Authority**. Who produced the website and what do they know? Is this someone who has studied in the field? Is this person or organization the logical one to be publishing about this topic? Look for a biography of the author and that author's credentials. Check the domain (.edu, .com) that the website comes from. Is the website trying to sell you something?
>   - *Institute of Historical Review* (IHR) (http://www.ihr.org). Organization that takes issue

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[5] Grassian, Esther. Thinking Critically and World Wide Web Resources. (http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/criticl/index.htm) and Grassain Esther, Thinking Critically about Discipline-Based World Wide Web Resources (http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/discipline.htm) and Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply and Questions to Ask (U.C. Berkeley Library) (http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib.Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html).

with the documentation of the Holocaust, among other issues. Many historians question the authority of the authors of the articles published by the IHR and its publications and website. Authors either lack advanced historical credentials like a PhD., practice in a related field, or are journalists or not parishioners of history at all. Many historians also argue that the primary sources used by the IHR to make such claims as the gas chambers never existed in the concentration camps or that there was no organized attempt to exterminate the European Jews by the Nazi's are weak and used in a biased manner.

➢ **Audience**. For whom was the site created? If it's for Mrs. Smiths 4th grade Social Studies class, the information may be too basic. If it was created for a general audience, it may not be academic enough to use in a scholarly research paper. This is the equivalent of using the *World Book Encyclopedia* for your research, a fine encyclopedia if you are in grade school, but unacceptable for college level research.

➢ **Accuracy and Content**. Does the information appear accurate based on your research? Make comparisons with other web pages, journal articles, and books. Watch for inaccuracies with dates and other material.   Do you detect bias? Has the website been created by someone or an organization that has a viewpoint that might bias their data? Is the collection of the information sloppy? Look for inaccuracies if documents have been transcribed or retyped.

Compare *Martin Luther King Jr. – A True Historical Examination* (http://www.martinlutherking.org) to *The King Center* (http://www.thekingcenter.org) The site Martin Luther King Jr. has been created by someone who is sympathetic to the white supremacist movement. No longer linking any author information, the site focuses not only on the controversial issues of Martin Luther King's life such as plagiarism in his writings, but includes tangential issues such as rap lyrics, Kwanzaa, and Jews and the Civil Rights Movement. Heavily cited is a book by David Duke, an affiliate of the Ku Klux Klan. The

King Center site seeks to present and preserve Martin Luther King's papers and writings and to publicize programs.

➢ **Currency**. When was the website last revised? Old information can be false, inaccurate, and, in some cases harmful. Websites untouched for over two years probably are not very useful for scholarly research.

➢ **Navigability and Structure**. Do the links work well or are most of them dead? Is the site logically organized? If you cannot find your resources, does it matter what the site contains?

Rely on your own gut instinct as well. If the website appears too good to be true, and you can't find an authoritative author or producer, then it probably isn't as good as it appears. Another way to help you decide the quality of a website is to evaluate the web pages that list it as a link. In the Google or AltaVista search box you can type **link:** in the search box and then copy the address of the web page in which you are interested. The results will all have links to that particular page. Remember that a popular page does not always mean quality, it could be the universal example of a bad page. You could also check some of the search directories above and see if your page is listed.

Sites Concerned with Primary Sources [6]

In addition, sites with primary sources have some additional evaluation criteria to consider.

➢ **Quality of scans of documents and images**. Has the integrity of the original image been preserved? Are there mechanisms such as

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[6] See also: Public History Resource Center Rating System (http://www.publichistory.org/evaluation/index2.html)

enlarging, to enhance the image for better examination? Has the document been transcribed to assist you in reading the handwriting?

➢ **Searchability**. Is the text of the documents searchable? Is there also a subject search?

➢ **Bibliography or Webliography.** Is a list of materials for further research, both print and on the Internet, included?

➢ **Interpretive or Descriptive Materials**. Are there added materials that help you understand the collection? Since you cannot see the original "box" of materials, how will you get a sense of the whole collection? Is the interpretation by someone who is an authority?

Putting it all together: Using the Internet Efficiently and Wisely

You've selected your general topic of Japanese Americans and their internment in camps in the United States during World War II. While you develop a thesis statement with your professor, you can begin searching on the web with these words.

1. Use a search directory to begin your search. Often you will find the best information without having to search though pages of irrelevant information that a search engine will bring up. For instance, if you go to the Librarians Index to the Internet (http://www.lii.org) and enter the search terms "Japanese internment", you will find about sixteen websites. Not all are relevant, but the following are very useful:

   ➢ **Suffering Under A Great Injustice: Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese American Internment at Manzanar**
   http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aamhtml/aamhome.html

   ➢ **War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945**
   http://dynaweb.oac.cdlib.org/dynaweb/ead/calher/jvac/@Generic__BookView

   ➢ **Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives**
   http://jarda.cdlib.org/

2. Use one or two of the search engines to find other resources to add to your list above. Using Google, you could, in this case, use the basic

search and type in the keyword box "japanese american internment camps". In this case you would want to be more specific because American GI's were also "interned" as prisoners in Japan. Some possible useful results:

> **The Japanese American Internment** (some oral histories)
  http://www.oz.net/~cyu/internment/main.html

> **Japanese American Exhibit and Access Project**
  http://www.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/harmony/

> **Children of the Camps**
  http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/

If you felt you wanted more images, you could do an advanced Google search and limit your results to files that had .jpg or .gif extensions.

3. Check the sites for the Deep Web listings of databases. In this case, no likely database appears, as of the writing of this book.

4. Make sure you evaluate your sources. Use the criteria above.

Suggested Readings

Trinkle, Dennis A. and Scott A. Merriman, eds. **The History Highway 3.0: A Guide to Internet Resources**. 3rd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2002.
    Huge bibliography of websites organized by country and general subject.

Trinkle, Dennis A. and Scott A. Merriman, eds. **The European History Highway: A Guide to Internet Resources**. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2002.

Bibliography of websites focused on Europe, including the former Soviet republics. Some duplication in the "general section" with the "History Highway" above.

Trinkle, Dennis A. ed. **Writing, Teaching and Researching, History in the Electronic Age: Historians and Computers**. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 1998.
Series of essays that include using computers in the classrooms to teach history as well as examples of non-traditional history projects.

Craver, Kathleen W**. Using Internet Primary Sources to Teach Critical Thinking Skills in History**. Westport, Connecticut, 1999.
Assignments with study questions for upper division secondary school students and college level students.

Reagan, Patrick A. **History and the Internet: A Guide**. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
Barebones guide to Internet sites and searching.