

# PARIS JUNIOR COLLEGE

**Library Assistance**

# NOTICE

Major portions of this presentation are taken verbatim from  
*A Writer's Reference*, Sixth Edition by Diana Hacker, *et al.*

Hacker, Diana *et al.* *A Writer's Reference*. Boston: Bedford, 2009. Print.

# INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

AFTER VIEWING THIS PRESENTATION, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- ◎ Evaluate research sources for
  - Bias
  - Assessment of Argument
- ◎ Evaluate Web Site Content for
  - Authorship and/or Sponsorship
  - Purpose and Audience
  - Currency
- ◎ Search Academic Databases for peer-reviewed journal articles using
  - Boolean Operators
  - Full-text Articles

Print | Periodical | Online

# EVALUATING ALL SOURCES

# CHECK FOR SIGNS OF BIAS

## Ask Yourself These Questions

- ⊙ Does the author(s) have political leanings that affect their viewpoint?
- ⊙ Are the author(s) associated with a special interest group?
- ⊙ Are opposing views offered and treated fairly?
- ⊙ *Does the author(s) language show signs of bias?*

## Look Out for These Pitfalls

- ⊙ Much of the information on the Internet is presented by persons and groups that have specific goals and agendas.
- ⊙ Often the goals and agendas of the group are not clearly stated.
- ⊙ Don't be fooled: many people use the Internet as a soapbox to sound off.

# ASSESSING AN ARGUMENT

## Ask Yourself These Questions

- ⊙ What is the author(s)' central claim or thesis?
- ⊙ Is there credible evidence to support the author's claim?
- ⊙ Are statistics reliable and consistent with other sources?
- ⊙ *Does the author(s) language show signs of bias?*

## Look Out for These Pitfalls

- ⊙ Sometimes an author's assumptions can be questionable.
- ⊙ Authors often have trouble refuting opposing arguments.
- ⊙ Many authors fall prey to illogic and false assumption.

# EVALUATING WEB SITE CONTENT

[CRITERIA TO BE USED ON ONLINE SOURCES OUTSIDE OF THE PROTECTED ACADEMIC DATABASES.]

- ☐ Authorship
- ☐ Sponsorship
- ☐ Purpose and Audience
- ☐ Currency

# AUTHORSHIP

## Suggestions:

*Does the Web site or document have an Author?*

Click and scroll until you find the author's name.

Search the site or navigate to the homepage

Look for a "search this site" link

- ◎ Determine credibility of author(s) by checking their credentials
- ◎ If credentials are not listed, cut and paste author's name into Google and evaluate number of hits and how many times his/her articles are cited by other authors
- ◎ Check if the author(s) has a homepage that provides evidence of expertise in field



# SPONSORSHIP

## *Who sponsors the site?*

*Often sponsorship is unclear or hard to find.*

*Sometimes it may not be given.*

### Suggestions:

Check the URL for hints about sponsorship by determining the site's domain.

- ⦿ .com *commercial*
- ⦿ .edu *educational*
- ⦿ .org *nonprofit organization*
- ⦿ .mil *military*
- ⦿ .net *network*

Country of origin may also be indicated: uk (United Kingdom) or jp for Japan

# PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

*Why was the site created?*

- *To argue a position?*
- *To sell a product?*
- *To inform readers?*

*Who is the site's intended Audience?*

- *Are you the intended audience?*
- *If you don't fit the audience profile, do you think the information is still relevant to your topic?*

# CURRENCY

## Ask Yourself These Questions

- ⦿ Is there a date anywhere on the opening page of the Web site that indicates when it was written or when it was last modified or revised?
- ⦿ Are there any other clues to indicate that the material is current and timely?
- ⦿ If any information is presented graphically, is there a date stating when the data were collected?
- ⦿ If the information is periodical in nature, is the latest edition or publication stated?

## Look Out for These Pitfalls

- ⦿ Dates and times of research are not always clearly stated.
- ⦿ If modification dates or revision dates are given in an easily viewable area, do they match the dates of the research?
- ⦿ Dates can have different meanings: when the information was first written, when it was first posted to the Internet, or when it was last modified or revised.

# TIP:

If sponsorship and Authorship of your source Web site are both unclear....

Think twice about using the site for your research.



# TIP:

If the Web site's URL is particularly long...

You may have to truncate or shorten it to find the real author/sponsor.

For example:

In a really long URL from an online source, truncate or shorten it back the three-letter domain...

This will assist your finding the real sponsor of the site.

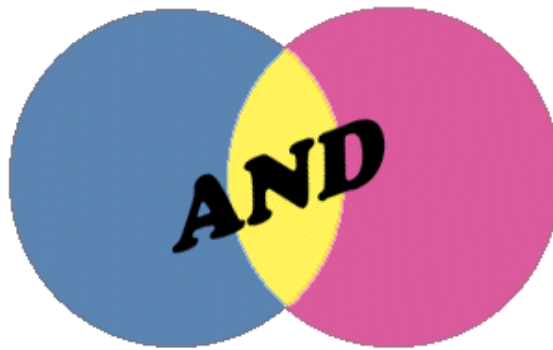
# BOOLEAN OPERATORS - A REVIEW

- ◎ The **AND** operator
  - ◎ This operator can be used to link two or more terms together to limit your search.
- ◎ The **OR** operator
  - ◎ This operator can be used to broaden your search results.
- ◎ The **NOT** operator
  - ◎ This operator can be used to narrow your search results and help you exclude terms you don't need.

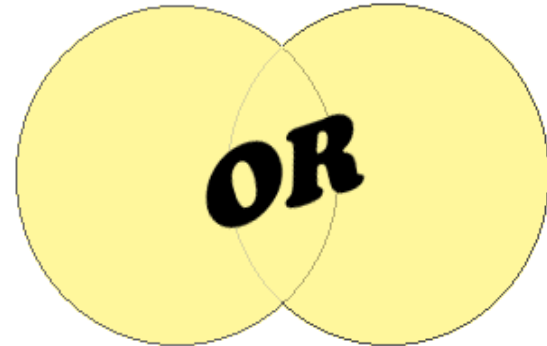
# BOOLEAN EXAMPLES

CLICK ON THIS LINK FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION OF USING BOOLEAN OPERATORS

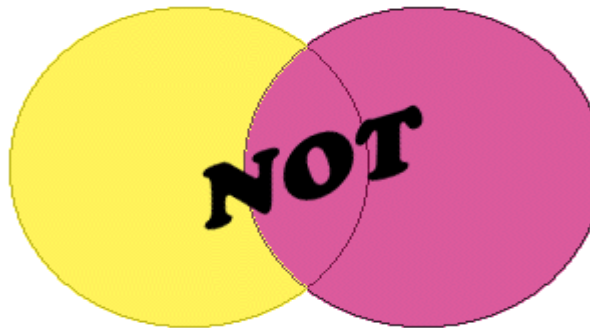
[HTTP://WWW.LIB.JMU.EDU/GOLD/BOOLEAN.HTM](http://www.lib.jmu.edu/gold/boolean.htm)



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# MORE HINTS TO REFINE YOUR SEARCH

- ◎ “Use an asterisk as a substitute for letters that might vary: *i.e.* ‘marine biolog ’ (to find *marine biology* or *marine biologist*, for example.)”

Hacker, Diana. *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*. New York: Bedford, 2006. Print.



# HOW TO AVOID INTERNET PLAGIARISM

- ◎ *Understand what plagiarism is*
  - ◎ *Give proper credit when using someone else's intellectual property*
- ◎ *Treat Web sources in the same way you treat print sources*
  - ◎ *Carefully cite any language found on the Internet, even .gov and .org sites*
- ◎ *Keep track of which words come from sources and which are your own*
  - ◎ *Quote any information you use verbatim*
  - ◎ *Paraphrase and summarize according to Modern Language Association's Style guidelines*
  - ◎ *Use in-text citations and signal words to introduce other people's intellectual property*
- ◎ *Avoid Web sites that bill themselves as "research services" and sell essays*



# INFORMATION LITERACY

"TO BE INFORMATION LITERATE, A PERSON MUST BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE WHEN INFORMATION IS NEEDED AND HAVE THE ABILITY TO LOCATE, EVALUATE, AND USE EFFECTIVELY THE NEEDED INFORMATION." (AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 1989)

An overall goal of the PJC Library is to help students become responsible, effective citizens in an information based economy. The National Forum on Information Literacy and the American Library Association Information Literacy Guidelines suggest that the ability to effectively identify an information need and to efficiently locate and evaluate relevant information to complete a research project, promotes student success both at college and later in the workplace. An information literate student can communicate via e-mail, access relevant research databases, and prepare persuasive reports and presentations. Accurate keyboarding skills are also a basic requirement of being information literate.

[American Library Association ACRL Guidelines for Information Literacy](#)

[Information Literacy: Building Blocks of Research: Overview of Designs, Process, and Outcomes](#)

[iCritical Thinking Certification Examination iSkills Tests](#)

[Paris Junior College Internet Use Policy](#)

The Library encourages you to pursue both a holistic and analytic approach to your education while attending Paris Junior College by becoming a critical thinker through information literacy. To help you achieve that goal, we have listed links to Web sites which will help you understand the importance of becoming information literate. After completing your relevant course work here at PJC, you may want to test your critical thinking skills by taking the iCritical Thinking Certification examination offered by the Educational Testing Service.

