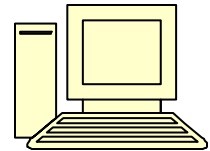


# Net-Wise Tips for Writers



by Jeanetta Chrystie, Ph.D.

**Contents:** Web resource [credibility](#), Internet [Wise](#), Search Engine [savvy](#), quick [facts](#), [browsers](#), [images](#), the [invisible](#) Web, language [translation](#), make a [web](#) site, control [e-mail](#).

## Evaluate the Quality of Web Research Resources In Search of **CREDIBILITY**

Information published on the web is seldom subjected to the level of review (by peers, editors or experts) that has become standard practice in print publishing. When you search the web for serious research questions, you run the risk of being misled by ill-informed web sites.

1. **Author Identity and Objectivity** – Identify the author and evaluate his or her credentials.
2. **Content** – Examine the content of the web site. A date on the page helps identify timeliness. To what depth is the subject covered? Have important topics or considerations been omitted?
3. **Form and Appearance** – Look for poor grammar, spelling errors, loud colors, graphics that do not add to the content of the page. All these indicators suggest a low-quality resource.
4. **What to do?** – If you decide to rely on a questionable resource, find a corroborating source.

## Become Internet Wise

### Need to learn about new Internet technologies?

Watch *fantastic* yet brief videos at <http://www.commoncraft.com/show> that explain technology topics in Plain English with easy-to-follow examples. After you select a video, click on the free version to watch & download. Many topics have a written transcript available for free download.

- World Wide Web (subset of the Internet) <http://www.commoncraft.com/world-wide-web>
- Blogs and Blogging ..... [1http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs](http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs)
- Twitter ..... <http://www.commoncraft.com/twitter>
- RSS (subscribing to Blog/news feeds) ... [http://www.commoncraft.com/rss\\_plain\\_english](http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english)
- Wikis (share online documents) <http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english>
- Podcasting ..... <http://www.commoncraft.com/podcasting>
- Social Bookmarking ..... <http://www.commoncraft.com/bookmarking-plain-english>
- Phishing Scams ..... <http://www.commoncraft.com/phishing>

**Interactive Online World Newspapers** – <http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/>

**Internet Scams** – Be careful: social networks may threaten your privacy/computer’s safety  
[http://www.pcworld.com/article/159738/5\\_facebook\\_schemes\\_that\\_threaten\\_your\\_privacy.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/159738/5_facebook_schemes_that_threaten_your_privacy.html)

**Internet/Cyberspace Hoaxes** – Always check the latest virus warning and chain e-mail letter for validity BEFORE forwarding it to all your friends.

- Hoax Busters – Internet hoaxes, scams & chain letters ..... <http://www.hoaxbusters.org/>
- Hoax Slayer – latest e-mail hoaxes ..... <http://www.hoax-slayer.com/>
- Museum of Hoaxes – from online mischief to malice <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/>
- McAfee – Virus and Hoax information ..... <http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp>
- F-Secure – Virus World Map ..... <http://www.f-secure.com/virus-info/hoax/>

**Can't find your topic on the Internet?****Basic Search Engine Savvy**

- a. If you're writing about ski resorts in Vermont, in the search box type: **ski vermont**  
Using uppercase retrieves only web sites with Vermont capitalized, lowercase gets both.
- b. If you want sites about Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace," type: **"War and Peace"**  
The double quotes make it a phrase search, not just any pages about war & any about peace.
- c. If you're not sure about a spelling, use wildcard characters: **gene\*logy and chemi\***  
The asterisk replaces one or more characters, so **chemi\*** gets chemical, chemistry, chemist.
- d. If you want multiple topics in a single web site, use AND or NEAR:  
So, **"war and peace" AND tolstoy** gets web pages with the phrase and the name present.  
But, **"war and peace" NEAR tolstoy** gets pages with the phrase & name <10 words apart.
- e. If you want either topic, or to exclude a topic, use OR or NOT:  
Typing: **peanut OR butter** retrieves web pages with either word present (is default search).  
Typing: **peanut NOT butter** gets web pages about peanuts that do not mention butter.  
What happens if you type: **"peanut butter"** as a phrase?
- f. So typing: **"chocolate cake" AND recipe NOT nuts** gets you chocolate cake recipes (not cookie recipes) that don't include nuts, caveat—if nuts are listed as optional you still won't get that web page in your results because you excluded pages where the word nuts existed.
- g. The search string you type into the search engine's "search box" can become very complex to get exactly what you want the first time—and without a lot of extra *misfits*. For instance:
  - (1) For information on the history of the ownership of the Mona Lisa masterpiece, type:  
**("mona lisa" AND owner\*) OR ("mona lisa" NEAR history)** – the ( ) groups terms
  - (2) When I needed information for a Christian History article on Dante's epic poem *The Divine Comedy* & it's link to the 1<sup>st</sup> Jubilee Pilgrimage of 1300 A.D., I added keywords:  
**like:www.dante.com**                      this retrieves web sites similar to the web site I specified  
**url:dante**                                      this retrieves web sites with "dante" in the URL

**Need a small fact without reading web sites?****Search Engine Tricks**

- [www.alltheweb.com](http://www.alltheweb.com) Advanced search, or filter your results to screen offensive content.
- [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com) Type common questions in the knowledge base, such as *how many cups are in a gallon?* – and you'll receive a direct answer.
- [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) Type **define** and then a term (in the search box) to learn new terms/genre jargon that is not yet in print or online dictionaries.
- <http://www.live.com/> View your search term in bold text in the results' descriptions.
- [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) NewsSearch lets you peruse topics from 7000+ news sources.

**Loved using Netscape but now need a new browser?****Great Browsers**

- Firefox, full-featured & Mozilla based too <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/ie.html>
- Opera, great features & popular in Europe <http://www.opera.com/>
- Google Chrome, powerful & uses minimal screen space <http://www.google.com/chrome>

**Need an image for your web site or self-published poetry?****Free images**

- Search.com <http://www.search.com/images>
- Altavista Images <http://www.altavista.com/image/default>
- Google Images <http://images.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi>

**Still can't find quite what you need?****Search the INVISIBLE Web**

- A. More and more companies are migrating to providing information via on-line databases rather than creating web pages for large amounts of data – it's cheaper and easier to update.
- B. Each database, or group of databases, provides specialized search tools because the information contained is NOT searchable by normal web browser's search engines.
- C. Here are a few web sites with database directories, which break information into categories.
1. For Academic Research <http://infomine.ucr.edu>
  2. Librarians Internet Index <http://lii.org>
  3. Complete Planet [www.completeplanet.com](http://www.completeplanet.com)
  4. Category Directory Search <http://www.search.com/dir>
  5. Searching the Invisible Web <http://www.weblens.org/invisible.html>
  6. Guide to the Invisible Web <http://oedb.org/library/college-basics/invisible-web>
  7. Invisible Web <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/InvisibleWeb.html>
- D. Three MetaSearch sites that will query web catalogs and some invisible web material:
- [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)      [www.search.com](http://www.search.com)      and      [www.ex2find.com](http://www.ex2find.com)

**Need to translate a block of text into another language?**

- Translate, or put a translation link on your web site <http://babelfish.yahoo.com/>

**Need to create your own web site?**

- Free & easy do-it-yourself templates (domain name \$\$) <http://www.tripod.lycos.com/>
- Great Christian web host with cheap domain name price <http://www.sonservers.com/>

**E-mail driving you crazy?****A new trend is targeted e-mail addresses****1. Clutter Attacks our E-mail in-boxes and tempts us to fritter away our writing time.**

Writers tend to become over-involved in multiple projects in various areas of their lives. Until recently, I received 160-250 e-mails daily in one mailbox. A recent trend among on-line research professionals is *targeted e-mail addresses*.

Basically, these net-savvy folks create an e-mail address for each project/segment of their life. While this initially sounds confusing, with practice it becomes *a time-saving tool*. I've found it *relieves the mental whiplash* of trying to wade through a myriad of e-mail topics, sources, & spam. Also, using *targeted e-mail addresses*, lets me set a SPAM filter on my *sub* e-mail accounts *high* without affecting my ability to receive necessary large attachments in my primary e-mail.

**2. ISP's Support Targeted E-mail Addresses**

Many ISPs (Internet Service Providers) allow you to create multiple e-mail addresses. Plus, free e-mail providers such as Yahoo and Juno are available to collect junk e-mail when you "must" provide an e-mail address to an online resource. I empty my Yahoo Spam folders monthly, and delete/replace "throw-away" e-mail accounts annually.

*Start gradually!* Creating several e-mail addresses at once is merely an exercise in *crazy-making*. Creating targeted e-mail address allows me to only check sub e-mail accounts on the weekend. Now, I receive 35-50 e-mail messages a day in my primary account, the other accounts I check weekly or monthly, and e-mail no longer eats away my daily writing time.