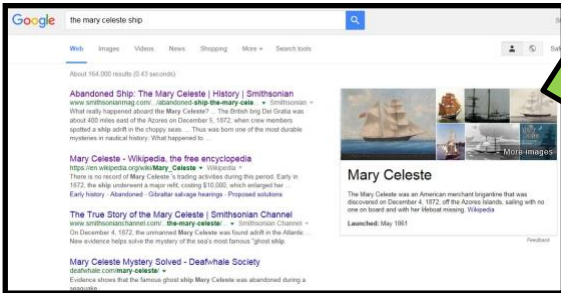# ONLINE RESEARCH

Helpful Hints

What are Search Engines and how do they work?

A Search Engine is a program that searches for information uploaded to the World Wide Web.

Google bing YAHOO!

SERPs! (Search Engine Results Pages) A list of documents, images, and other files listed for your search.

Keep in Mind: The order of the website list is <u>not</u> organized by information accuracy or relevance!

Complex formulas in search engine programs that rank websites in order are usually based on *how often a page is linked to another page*. The idea is good websites are linked more often than poor websites. The first link in the list doesn't mean it is the best website for your information needs; it is only the most popular link!

How do Keywords and Boolean Operators help your research?
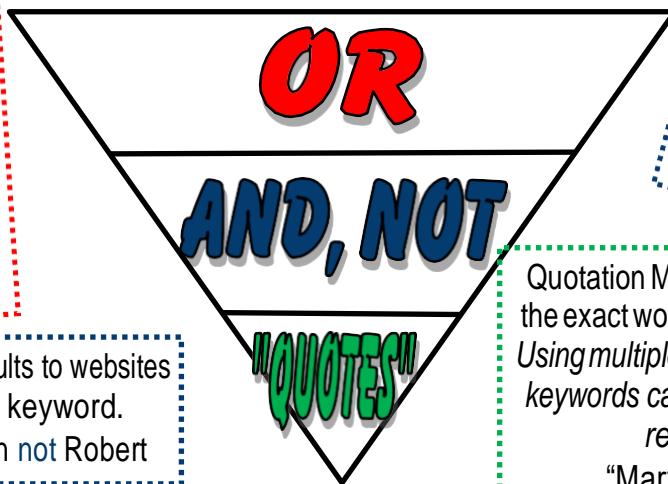
Boolean Operators are simple words (AND, OR, NOT or AND NOT) used to combine or exclude keywords in a search. This gives you a more focused and productive list of sources. Using Boolean Operators should save time by eliminating websites that must be read before discarding.

Using OR gives results with the broadest range of websites.
Bigfoot or Sasquatch
Results list any websites with *either* word. This search returns the most results to sort through.

OR

AND, NOT

"QUOTES"

Using AND narrows results to websites with *both* keywords.
Earhart and Disappearance

Using NOT eliminates results to websites that *don't include* a keyword.
Kennedy Assassination not Robert

Quotation Marks return results that have the exact wording together in the website. *Using multiple Boolean Operators with your keywords can focus your results to most relevant websites.*
"Mary Celeste" and Ship

What Websites and Domains Are Most Trustworthy or Reliable?

KNOW what type of website and what audience it is written for. Check the URL *(Uniform Resource Locator)* address BEFORE you click:

Wikipedia & YouTube
Information is contributed by anyone who wants to post material—expertise is not noted or required.

Organization
Originally intended for non-profit groups and museums—now businesses can use

Commercial or **Network**
Businesses or Personal—could be biased towards having users buy products

Government
Federal or State agencies

Education & Online Encyclopedias
University and academic sources

How Can I Check the Accuracy of Website Information ?

WATCH out for a personal page or forum!
Websites like "GeoCities" or "aol.com" belong to individuals, who may or may not, be an expert. You don't want websites where anyone can post information.
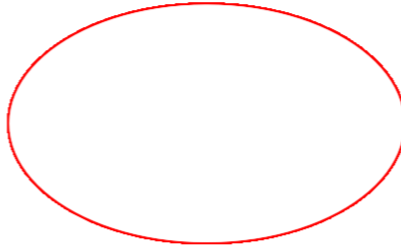
SEARCH the Author!
Use a search engine to look up the author's name, organization, or business to verify their credentials as an expert.

READ the "About" section!
Look to see if the website is associated with another place or name that is familiar and trustworthy.
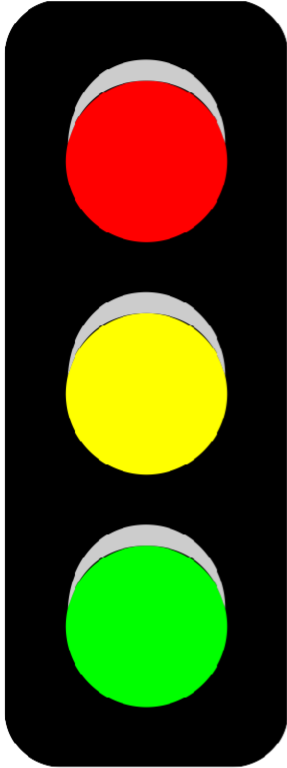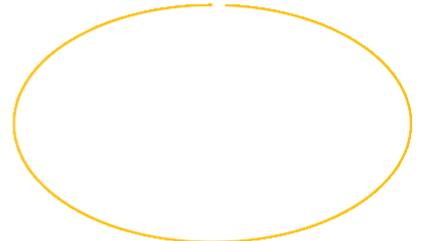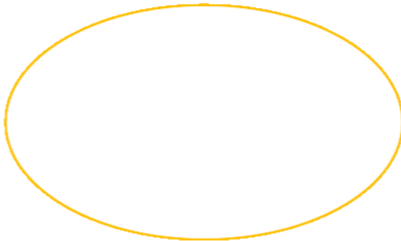
NOTICE the clutter!
Be cautious of websites that look cluttered with advertisements, or are trying to sell you something.
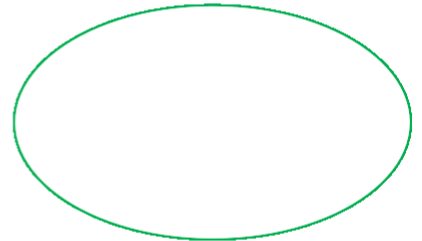
Know The Purpose of Websites

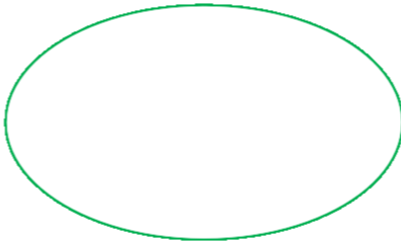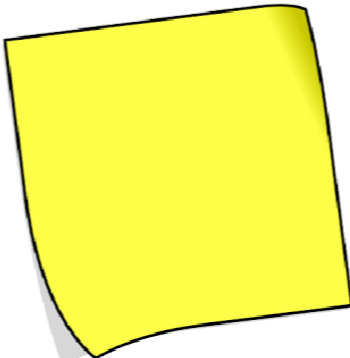Challenging Minds! Project ©2015

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The Free Encyclopedia

You Tube

LOOK for a revised or recent date!

If website is checked regularly for dead links, or new information added recently, it may be less likely to contain inaccurate data.

CHECK more than one source!

Find the same information on other websites to validate facts. Check links to other resources that corroborate.