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### **Comparing traditional print with internet sources**

#### **This activity will...**

- Stimulate discussion of the reliability of sources
- Draw attention to the wide variety of available material
- Encourage students to read critically
- Raise supervisor awareness of the kinds of material students might access

Note: this activity works best with more than one student and should take no more than 15 mins at the start of an early supervision

#### **In the supervision:**

1. Ask students to discuss and note what they think the differences between traditional print and internet sources are.
2. If necessary, introduce the following prompts to direct the discussion:
  - Publication process
  - Authorship and affiliations
  - Sources and quotations
  - Bias and special interests
  - Author qualifications
  - Publication information
3. As you set the essay, ask students to submit a list of five traditional print and five internet sources that they think relate to the essay focus in some way. These may include less reliable sources that they come across; the importance is that they acknowledge any bias or unreliability where necessary.

See reverse of sheet for potential points to draw out during discussion.



### **Publication Process**

**Print Sources:** Traditional print sources go through an extensive publication process that includes editing and article review. The process has fact-checkers, multiple reviewers, and editors to ensure quality of publication.

**Internet Sources:** Anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can publish a website or electronic document. Most web documents do not have editors, fact-checkers, or other types of reviewers.

### **Authorship and Affiliations**

**Print Sources:** Print sources clearly indicate who the author is, what organization(s) he or she is affiliated with, and when his or her work was published.

**Internet Sources:** Authorship and affiliations are difficult to determine on the Internet. Some sites may have author and sponsorship listed, but many do not.

### **Sources and Quotations**

**Print Sources:** In most traditional publications, external sources of information and direct quotations are clearly marked and identified.

**Internet Sources:** Sources the author used or referred to in the text may not be clearly indicated in an Internet source.

### **Bias and Special Interests**

**Print Sources:** While bias certainly exists in traditional publications, printing is more expensive and difficult to accomplish. Most major publishers are out to make a profit and will either not cater to special interest groups or will clearly indicate when they are catering to special interest groups.

**Internet Sources:** The purpose of the online text may be misleading. A website that appears to be factual may actually be persuasive and/or deceptive.

### **Author Qualifications**

**Print Sources:** Qualifications of an author are almost always necessary for print sources. Only qualified authors are likely to have their manuscripts accepted for publication.

**Internet Sources:** Even if the author and purpose of a website can be determined, the qualifications of the author are not always given.

### **Publication Information**

**Print Sources:** Publication information such as date of publication, publisher, author, and editor are always clearly listed in print publications.

**Internet Sources:** Dates of publication and timeliness of information are questionable on the internet. Dates listed on websites could be the date posted, date updated, or a date may not be listed at all.