Navigating sources can be difficult even for the most experienced college students. When looking for either print or internet sources, there are several guidelines you can use to ensure that the sources you choose are both reliable and useful to you in an academic paper.

Why Isn't the Internet Reliable?

Anyone who has a computer — from professors to grade-school children — can publish on the Internet.

The Internet is an anonymous space in which people can claim false credentials. It is also widely used as a space in which people can pursue their hobbies; having a casual interest in something is very different from being an expert.

Because the Internet reaches a wide audience, many people use it as a way to further their own political agendas. These people might post things that are not true — simply to support their cause.

How to Use the Internet for Research:

As a student of SHSU, you have access to a large variety of online databases; check out the "Databases" area on the Newton Gresham Library website. These are collections of major journal, newspaper, and magazine articles, which are generally peer-reviewed (edited by an outside source who is an expert in the field). Try searching for information on your topic in databases like EBSCOhost, LexisNexis, or JSTOR. When you find an article that is relevant to your research, check out the bibliography. This could lead you to other valuable sources. Google Scholar is another highly accessible engine that can be used to find sources.

Additionally, see if the source lists a person or organization as the author. If not, be wary of the source's credibility. If so, what does a Google search reveal about that person or organization? Always verify your information.

A Word About Wikipedia:

Since Wikipedia allows volunteers to submit content to their website, you cannot be sure that their information is correct. Use Wikipedia only as a launching point; there are

Kinds of Print Sources

Primary sources come directly from a time period or experience/event, or the texts your