

Finding Good Information:

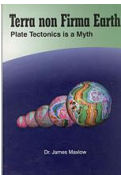
Understanding how to research a topic using credible, authoritative, accurate sources

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The University of Montana; Feb. 2009

Not all information sources should be treated as equal.


They may differ in: quality, accuracy, credibility, significance, authoritativeness, relevance, date published, audience level, etc.

How would you compare the two information sources below that both discuss plate tectonics?

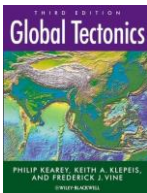


1

Format: eBook
ISBN: 0 952 2603 28
Publisher: Oneoff Publishing.com
Pages: 255
Figures: 74



The [Web site](#) of Dr. James Maxlow disputing plate tectonics and proposing an alternative theory of an expanding earth.
Note: The author published an online [book](#) and has [lectures](#) on YouTube.



2

Global Tectonics, 3rd Edition
Philip Kearey, Keith A. Klepeis,
Frederick J. Vine
ISBN: 978-1-4051-0777-8
Paperback
496 pages
January 2009, Wiley-Blackwell

A Scholarly book by several scientists published by one of the top science publishers, and widely used as a university textbook for teaching the current knowledge of plate tectonics.

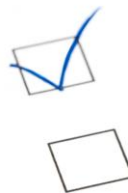
Questions to Ask:

- **What kind of information is it?**
 - Book
 - Government Document
 - Journal or Magazine
 - Website
 - Others?
- **Is it scholarly or popular?**
 - Who wrote it?
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - Who published it?
 - Does it cite authentic research?



More Questions:

- **Is it peer reviewed?**
 - Was it examined by other experts before publication?
 - Was the author required to include the research method?
 - Is there a bias?
 - Was the author paid for the research?
- **Is it worth retrieving and reading?**
 - Is it current?
 - Is it relevant to the topic at a specific level?
 - Is the source trustworthy?



Accuracy & credibility of information is important.

One type of information source is not always

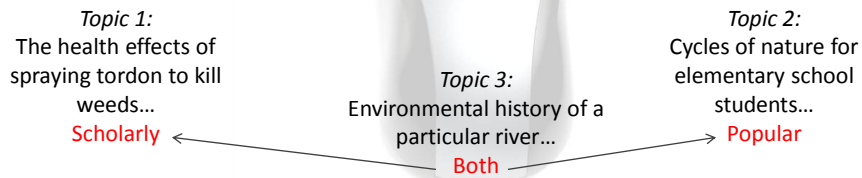
better

than another type...

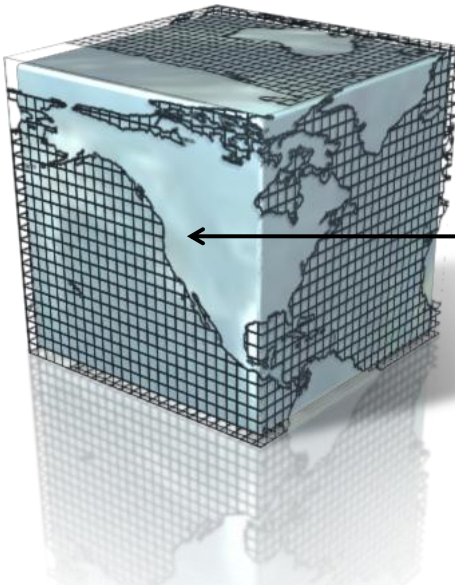
Rather some information is

more **appropriate, authoritative, and/or effective**

when used in some discussion or publication venues



An Example



Class Topic:
Climate Change in
Montana

A Simple Google Search: What do you notice?



Web Images Maps News Shopping Gmail more

Google global warming montana Search

Web

Glaciers Melting In Montana Park, U.N. Is Asked To Declare Park An ...
Mar 13, 2006 ... Lake McDonald, in Glacier National Park, Montana (AP Photo) ...
www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/03/13/tech/main/031313glacier_melting.html
Cached - Similar pages

Missoulian: Report details global warming's role in wildfire risk
Report details global warming's role in wildfire risk ... Of all the Western states, Montana's wildfire season could be most affected by the warmer ...
www.missoulian.com/articles/2004/09/01/news/mtregional/news07.txt - 78k -
Cached - Similar pages

Global Warming Pollution — Montana Environmental Information System
NATURE'S TRUST: A Legal, Political, Economic, and Moral Frame for Global Warming — A lecture by University of Oregon Law Professor Mary Christina Wood, ...
www.meic.org/energy/global_warming_pollution - 44k - Cached - Similar pages

Global Warming Update: Snow Blocks Key Road in Montana Park ...
Jul 3, 2008 ... Of course, one year's worth of record snowfalls doesn't disprove the global warming myth. However, as drought conditions in this region ease ...
newsbusters.org/blogs/mel-sheppard/2008/07/03/global-warming-update-snow-blocks-key-road-montana-park - 95k - Cached - Similar pages

Disney's New Hannah Montana Album Features 'Global Warming Anthem' ...
Aug 26, 2008 ... Disney's New Hannah Montana Album Features 'Global Warming Anthem'. Teen pop star sings 'Wake Up America,' warns the 'earth is calling out,' ...
www.topix.com/news/global-warming/2008/08/disneys-new-hannah-montana-album-features-global-warming-anthem - 46k - Cached - Similar pages

Who sponsors the info?

Is it relevant?

Global Warming Update: Snow Blocks Key Road in Montana Park
Due to record snowfalls in Montana National Park, Glacier National Park, Montana (AP Photo) ...
Sears NEED IT NOW!
America, We Can Provide Real Alternatives to Abortion!

Aug 26, 2008
Disney's New Hannah Montana Album Features 'Global Warming Anthem'
Teen pop star sings 'Wake Up America,' warns the 'earth is calling out,' but admits she doesn't know 'what all this means.'
Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama's two daughters, Malia, 9, and Sasha, 6, are big fans of Hannah Montana - and maybe there's a reason why.
Teen star Milley Cyrus, known as Hannah Montana in the Disney Channel TV series television of the same name, is now crusading for global warming activism. But she admits she isn't really sure what it means. Disney also owns ABC, a network that often hypes climate change activism.
On the 15-year-old singer's recently released album "Breakout," she sings that she wants America to wake up and deal with global warming. The song, "Wake Up America" is about taking care of the earth.

The Same Search in Web of Science: What differences do you notice?



ISI Web of KnowledgeSM Take the next step

All Databases Select a Database Web of Science

Search Cited Reference Search Advanced Search Search History

Web of Science®

Results Topic=(global warming or climat* change*) AND Title=(Mont Timespan=All Years Database=SCIENCE Citation=All) Results: 38

Refine Results

Search within results for

Subject Areas Refine

Document Types Refine

Source Titles

Publication Years

Institutions

Languages

Countries/Territories

Analyze Results

Climate change effects on historical range and variability of two large landscapes in western Montana, USA

Author(s) Keane RE, Holsinger LM, Parsons RA, et al. Source: FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 254 Issue: 3 Pages: 375-389 Published: FEB 10 2008

1. Title: Toward improved species Author(s) Parolo G, Rossi G, Fe Source: JOURNAL OF APPLIED Times Cited: 0

2. Title: Climate change effects on historical range and variability of two large landscapes in western Montana, USA Author(s) Keane RE, Holsinger LM, Parsons RA, et al. Source: FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 254 Issue: 3 Pages: 375-389 Published: FEB 10 2008

3. Title: Climate informed flood frequency analysis Author(s) Brunelle A, Rehfeldt GE, B Source: FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 255 Issue: 3-4 Pages: 836-846 Published: MAR 20 2008

4. Title: Holocene records of Dendroctonus Author(s) Brunelle A, Rehfeldt GE, B Source: FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 255 Issue: 3-4 Pages: 836-846 Published: MAR 20 2008

5. Title: Climate change effects on historical range and variability of two large landscapes in western Montana, USA Author(s) Keane RE, Holsinger LM, Parsons RA, et al. Source: FOREST ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT Volume: 254 Issue: 3 Pages: 375-389 Published: FEB 10 2008

Who published it?

Is it current?

Is it peer-reviewed?

Montana using hierarchical Bayesian






Remember:

Where you search determines what you find.

General web searches may produce
mixed & uncertain results.

Searching the best databases with
precise search statements usually produces
more relevant and authoritative results.

A skeptical researcher is a good researcher.

If you need further assistance with searching, ask a librarian.

