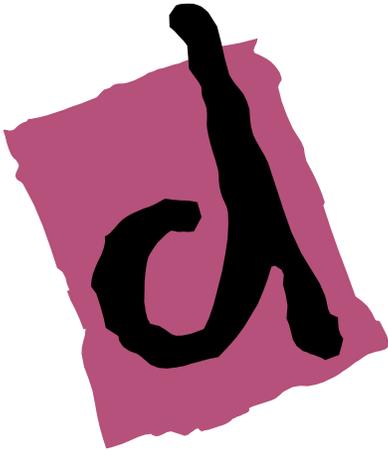


The Seven Steps to Web Evaluation (A-G)

STEP



DOMAIN ANATOMY



What is the meaning
behind a URL?



C. Domain Anatomy

Know The Main Domain... Basic web site name

Identify The Top Level Domain... Type of site & country code

Recognize The Mapping... Shows specific page on server

What Does It Mean – Relationship to research



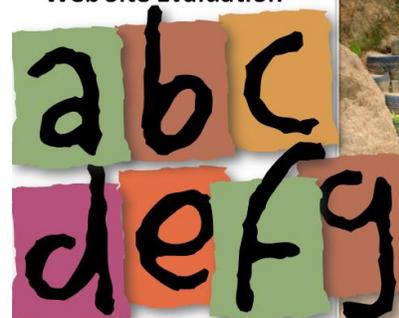
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With Michael Gorman

The Seven Steps To
Web Site Evaluation



Graphics from Microsoft Word 2007

The Seven Steps to Web Site Evaluation – Step A

D Is Domain Anatomy

Much can be determined by looking at the address of a website. Such things as sponsoring organization, type of organization and its intent, country of origin, and file names can all be gleaned from the address of a site. A good research technique involves studying and dissecting the web URL (domain anatomy) in order to determine if it fits the research being performed.

- 1. Know The Main Domain** – The main domain (Actual Domain) usually gives away the sponsoring organization name. In the case of www.biginfo.com/ca/infile.html, the section entitled “biginfo” is considered the Main Domain. It is the letters between the first two dots in the web address. Knowing the Main Domain can be very valuable because of its possible link to an organization. The Main Domain may also give away the purpose. There is a chance that the Main Domain (Actual Domain) could be a slogan instead of organization name. Consider the case of www.outlawgumchewing.org/stickyrules.htm. The Main Domain “outlawgumchewing” may actually contain the agenda rather than organization name. The Main Domain could also be a person or publications name. Last, the Main Domain may be insignificant or could distract you from the real organization. It is always a good idea to look in the web page to see if the actual sponsor relates with the Main Domain. Sometimes it may be a good idea to view only the Main Domain by including all characters up to the Top Domain (Suffix) as explained below. This may take the researcher to the main sponsor page.
- 2. Know The Top Level Domain** – The Top Level Domain usually comes after the Main Domain and is a two or three letter code identifying the type of website. This Top Level Domain (TLD) may also contain a two letter country code identifying the country of origin. Understand that the country code may not always be part of the suffix (TLD). In the case of www.biginfo.com/ca/infile.html, it can be seen that “com/ca” is the Top Level Domain (TLD). The portion “com” identifies the type of website as being commercial/business. The “ca” portion identifies country of origin as Canada. There will not always be a country code and, in that case, country for users in the United States is probably the USA (consider host country of researcher). Knowing the Top Level Domain (TLD) that contains this site identification and country can be useful. The country of origin could have a bias on topics (such as “Space Race” if origin is US compared to RU, or even “American Revolution” if origin is US as compared to UK). The site identification portion of Top Level Domain (TLD) is outlined below and could give hints toward a website’s purpose.
 - .com** *business, commercial, company (usually profit minded)*
 - .edu** *usually a college or university*
 - .k12** *k12 - school usually followed by state abbr. and US*
 - .org** *organization, club, interest group*
 - gov** *government agency*
 - .mil** *military interest*
 - .net** *independent organization, non profit, non educational*
 - .int** *international group*
 - .us** *country code check <http://www.iana.org/domains/root/db/>*
- 3. Recognize The Mapping** – In most cases the rest of the address after the suffix identifies the file name and page name of the particular page as it resides on the host computer.
- 4. What Does It Mean?** – Using the above information, does it have any determining factor as to whether the page can be a valuable part of intended research.