The following are useful guidelines in conducting web searches.

1. State your topic as a general question using clear and specific terms.

2. Decide what type of search you are doing (e.g., history, geography, archeology, art, literature, museums, et cetera). This will narrow the search if you are using a directory that is organized by general subject area.

3. Develop a list of key words or expressions for your search. Do not use any ambiguous or unclear words, and <u>be very careful</u> about spelling.

4. If your search comes up with too many results, narrow it down. An Advanced Search allows you to include the exact words you are looking for.

    NOTE: Many search engines use "Boolean operators" like "AND, OR, NOT" to conduct a search using exact terms. For a quick lesson on Boolean searching, refer to the following website: <http://adam.ac.uk/info/boolean.html#bool>.

5. When you find a useful site, add it to your bookmarks. If you lose track of a good site, use the History function to help you track back to the site. Organize and file bookmarks by topic so it is easy to refer back to useful websites.

6. Maintain an electronic resource list as you go. Always use copy-and-paste to record the exact URL. Also record the name of the web page, and a short note to help you remember what you found on that website.

7. BE CRITICAL. Avoid sites that have no information about the organization or individuals who created the site. Also avoid sites that have spelling errors or other obvious errors. If possible, try to select sites that do not include pop-up advertisements.

Remember, anyone can create a website and post information on the Internet. This means that not all sites are reliable.

> Always ask the following questions when visiting a website for the first time:
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> - Is the information accurate? (Can you find at least one other reliable print source that supports this information?)
>
> - Is the site reliable and valid? (What is the name of the organization/person that created this site? Does it include links to other educational sites?)
>
> - Is the site objective? (Is this site simply trying to convince you of a certain point of view? Does it seem biased?)
>
> - Is it up to date? (Check dates on the bottom of the page, and check links to make sure they are mostly working.)
>
> - Is it complete? (Is this site just a collection of bits and pieces lifted from other websites?)