

Developing a critical eye towards electronic resources involves understanding the strengths and limitations of each one – knowing how they work and what discourse communities they represent. I'd like you to spend some time using the resources listed below – launching them, and browsing or searching as if you were trying to acquire information for a research project. For Part One, select one topic, keyword, or search string and use the *same one* for all the resources below. Take some notes on each resource using the questions provided. For Part Two, view all the different types of sources, then answer the questions below.

## 1. modes of access and types of information storehouses

- <http://scholar.google.com>
- <http://www.infoseek.com>
- <http://www.jstor.org/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)
- <http://www.improb.com/airchives/classical/cat/cat.html>
- <http://www.purdue.edu> and follow any links under "News" or "Information"

### Questions to ask of access modes and information storehouses:

How easy is it to browse, navigate, access information from each one?

What does it allow you to do? What doesn't it allow you to do?

Does it lead you to a person or place and tell you how to contact that person or place?

Does it lead you to a complete source (i.e., full article, not just the abstract)?

What kinds and how many different types of sources does it take you to?

Does it provide any bibliographic information about the sources?

## 2. types of sources

- <http://www.theonion.com/>
- [http://home.onemain.com/~nospamtoday/bogus\\_news.html](http://home.onemain.com/~nospamtoday/bogus_news.html)
- <http://zapatopi.net/>
- search for your keyword **and** “editorial” in the Academic Search Elite database (start at Purdue library’s articles and databases page)
- search for your keyword **and** set parameters for “peer reviewed” in the Academic Search Elite database (start at Purdue library’s articles and databases page)

### Questions to ask of types of sources:

What types and kinds of information do you have control over?

Can you determine the following:

- What type of document is this?
- Who wrote this?
- What do they know?
- What are their credentials?
- What motivations might they have?

What is its main rhetorical function?

Does it allow you to evaluate the origin, reliability, usefulness of the source (triangulate)?