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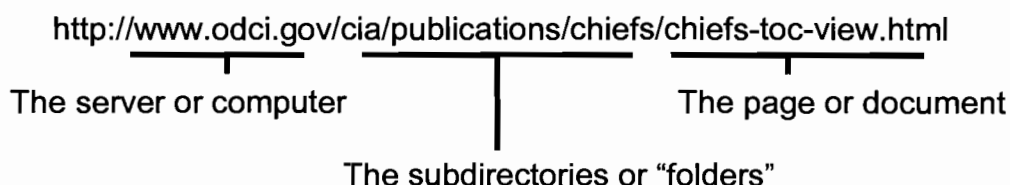
Criteria for Evaluating Sources

1. Content
   - What topics are included?
   - What is the geographical and chronological coverage of the work?
   - Are the topics explored in depth or summarized?
   - Do different versions (print, full-text, pdf) of the same document vary?
2. Currency
   - Is the publication date or most recent update indicated?
   - If it is older information, what has changed since it was written?
3. Authority
   - Is an author indicated?
   - What are the author's qualifications for writing on this subject?
   - How reputable is the publisher or source organization?
4. Accuracy
   - How reliable and free from error is the information?
   - Are sources of information cited?
5. Audience
   - Is the purpose of the publication to entertain, convince, or inform?
   - Is the vocabulary used technical or full of jargon?
6. Objectivity
   - Is there a balanced presentation of ideas?
   - How is the author trying to sway the opinion of the reader?
   - Sometimes what is not said is as important as what is.

How to interpret a Web address

Shorten the "URL" or Web address to determine the source of the page or document you are viewing.

http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/chiefs-toc-view.html

The server or computer   The page or document

The subdirectories or "folders"

By shortening the URL after the first section, you can determine that the Web site is run by the Office of the Director of Central Intelligence. The ".gov" on the end of the base address or domain means that it is a government site. Other domain indicators include .edu for universities and .org for nonprofit organizations.