Hi, this is Jenny from UNCG Libraries and I'm here to talk about web evaluation for your CST 105 class.

For your informative speech, you'll usually choose one of two options: community awareness or living history. For the community awareness option, you'll focus on a community organization, interview someone who works with that organization, and then find additional sources about that organization and the work they do. For the living history option, you'll select a historical event and interview someone you know who lived through it. For both options, you'll need to use secondary sources to help inform your audience, and in both cases, websites are a great place to start.

Let's do a Google search for a local organization here in Greensboro: Red Dog Farm. When you do a search in Google or another search engine, you may find ads at the top of your search results, although I don't see any here. In this case, you can look through the first few results and decide which seem relevant. I'll go with the first one. It has an address in Greensboro, so I think it's the one I'm talking about.

When you're evaluating a website to decide if it would be a good source to use and cite, you can start by using the A B C test. A stands for authority, b for bias, and c for currency. Let's apply that test here.

When you're trying to establish authority, you can start by attempting to identify the person, people, or organization responsible for the site. If an author isn't immediately obvious, so I don't see anyone's name specifically on this page, you can look for links like About or Contact, or take a look at the copyright information at the bottom of the page if they provide it. So, in this case, copyright 2013 Red Dog Farm. So in this case, it looks like the actual organization - Red Dog Farm - is taking responsibility for the content of this page. On the about link, I can also actually find information on specific people involved in this organization. This helps me as I try to identify someone to interview and also helps me feel comfortable that someone is taking responsibility for this site. Overall, I feel good about authority here. With a community organization like this one, I would expect the organization itself to be the main authority on their own work.

Bias can be a little trickier because almost any source has some level of bias. In this case, I think there's likely to be some bias because the organization wants you to have a good opinion of them and the work that they do. You'll want to carefully analyze any source for the presence of bias, but just because you find evidence of bias or prejudice or leaning one way or the other doesn't mean you have to trash the source. One way to help counteract bias is to use multiple sources that take different perspectives. So in a case like this, I think there may be some bias, but it's not enough to keep me from using this as a source for my speech. What I might do is try to find some additional sources, maybe some newspaper articles or other sources outside of their own website to counteract that bias.

Finally, the c is for currency and that just refers to how recently a source was published or updated. Currency is relative and depends on the topic you're researching. For the informative speech, I'd want to be more concerned with currency of sources on a community organization than sources on a historical event. We might not be getting late breaking news every day about the Vietnam War, though I would
want to have updated information about Red Dog Farm since it's an organization that is currently active. On this page, I can look at the copyright date on the bottom - 2013 - and I might also look at the news and events page to see if they're keeping up with news and events and things are clearly being updated.

Overall, this websites passes the ABC test. When you're considering a source, try applying the ABC criteria to determine whether or not it would be good to use. For your informative speech, websites are especially critical for the community awareness option, so you'll almost always want to include as one source the organization's website, but you will also find plenty of web sources out there on living history topics.

So, if I go back to Google and do a search for the Vietnam War, then I'm probably going to get a lot more results. A quick search for the Vietnam War brought back 128 million results, so I definitely want to be careful and make sure that I'm using sources I feel really good about. So if I take a look at this Wikipedia entry, I can apply that ABC test and determine whether or not I think it passes.

If you ever have questions about web evaluation or any other part of the research process, you can always visit library.uncg.edu and Ask Us!