

TYPES OF WEBSITES

A GUIDE TO WEBSITE DOMAINS AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR YOUR RESEARCH

WHAT ARE DOMAINS?



A website domain is the address for use by an individual or organization and operated as a business. They provide information and/or services, sometimes at a cost. It is *extremely* important to recognize what type of website you are using so as to be able to evaluate the information. The most common types of domains are:



.COM

The "com" is short for *commercial*, and this type of website relies on commerce, making it a business. The information provided will typically be at some cost, either paid for by the website visitor, or from ad space purchased by a third party. Remember to keep in mind the business interests(s) of the organization when evaluating the information on a .com

.ORG



This is an organization like a .com, but it is not a commercial enterprise. Typically, charitable organizations and non-profits will be a .org. This type of website isn't inherently more or less trustworthy than a .com, but one should keep in mind that all information provided will be in service of the organization.

.EDU



This type of website is owned and operated by an educational or research institution. All accredited institutions of higher learning in the United States are a .edu--a legitimate university or college will never be a .com or .org. The information on these websites will mostly pertain to the institution itself, but they also provide peer-reviewed research as well. Typically these are highly credible sources. Some educational institutions that are not universities use this domain, and are likewise reliable resources (such as the Smithsonian Institute webpages [si.edu])

.GOV



Used for any website affiliated with the U. S. federal government, such as loc.gov--the website for the Library of Congress. The information on .gov websites is likewise considered to be highly credible.

You will also see domains such as .uk, .ca, .de--these reflect the country in which the website is based.

Sources:

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc920#page-2>

A Dictionary of the Internet. Oxford University Press, 2019