

Student's name

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Class

6 December 2013

A-TACO Website Analysis

Website info: Christopher Columbus article from All About Explorers website

Web address: <http://allaboutexplorers.com/explorers/columbus/>

A	The "About" section of the website lists four authors, but their descriptions are ridiculous. For example, one author's bio includes the following: " Lauren Zucker, MD , is the AllAboutExplorers.com Staff Psychiatrist and Botanist. Known worldwide as the discoverer of the rare Australian Ligh-Ligh bush, which has arguably the sweetest fruit of any plant, she is better known in our offices for her delicious Lighberry jam." Another author states this: " Lochten deBrigg VI, Esq. , is our Legal and Political Analyst and Doughnut Glazer Laureate. He is rather equivocal about his full-time career, but we are told it involves playing cards and frequent relocation. He is widely traveled and is well acquainted with the personnel and facilities in many jurisdictions. In his spare time, Lochten enjoys reading, playing chess, and metal working. He considers his sheet metal sculptures to be "Traveling Artwork" and his pieces have been widely seen on automobiles in seven states. Lochten is currently in disguise, living with his mother." The author's name is suspiciously close to "locked in the brig," and the info about him as well as about the other author has nothing to do with the topic of the article. After the author info there is a link to "The Real Story," which includes the information that there are just two authors of the site both of whom are school teachers who want to teach their students how to evaluate websites. Alexa.com explains that the information on the website is made up and that the site was created to teach students how to evaluate websites. Alexa.com also shows that the site is not particularly popular.
T	The site has a copyright date of 2006-2013. Who.it shows it was created in 1995 and was last updated May 19, 2013. The site is clearly kept up to date. Since my topic is Christopher Columbus the dates are fine. There have been no new developments in the Columbus story, so the fact that the site was created almost 10 years ago really isn't important. The fact that the site has a current copyright date and was updated within the last year shows that the owners of the site maintain it.
A	While I don't know everything there is to know about Christopher Columbus, I do know that he did not use a cell phone, as the site claims. The site claims he was born in 1951 in Sydney, Australia and died in 1906 in Spain. Forgetting for a minute that this information does not match my prior knowledge, it is simply impossible for a person's date of death to be before his date of birth. The source mentions that the queen called a "toll-free number," and that Columbus appeared on the Larry King show. Even if the source includes some information that is correct (he was buried in Valladolid, Spain) there are so many errors that using any of the information would be a bad idea.

C	The coverage of the topic is quite superficial. This would be good for someone who has never learned about Columbus, but for my research, I need much more depth. I need to go beyond simple dates and look more at the lasting impact of Columbus's actions. For example, I would like to know more about his interactions with the indigenous people. The page touches very briefly on the major events in his life, like when he was born and died, when his voyages took, place, and when he returned, however, I will need much more information.
O	The source appears to be objective and presents information without including opinions. For example, there is no commentary about Columbus, just the basic facts about his actions. In recent years Columbus has become controversial, so the fact that the author left out opinion is good.

Overall Evaluation: Although most of the elements of A-TACO check out fine, the fact that the actual information in the site is made up means that I will not be using this as a research source. At the end of the article there are links to other resources which will probably be more useful to me.

Website info: "Nelson Mandela, South Africa's Liberator as Prisoner and President, Dies at 95" by Bill Keller from *The New York Times* online.

Web address: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/06/world/africa/nelson-mandela_obit.html?_r=0

A	<i>The New York Times</i> is often referred to as "The paper of record," because of its strong reporting and attention to detail and accuracy. Bill Keller is an op-ed columnist and a writer for the <i>New York Times Magazine</i> . For eight years he served as the <i>Times</i> executive editor. He was the Johannesburg, South Africa, bureau chief for the <i>Times</i> from 1992-1995 during which time he gained first-hand knowledge of the city, the country, and Nelson Mandela's influence on the country. Keller was awarded a Pulitzer prize in 1989 for his work in Moscow.
T	The article was written on December 5, 2013 just hours after Mandela's death was reported. The <i>Times</i> updates its site throughout each day as news happens. It also posts corrections and retractions as necessary. Since Mandela's death had just been announced, Keller's article is quite timely.
A	The article begins by stating that Mandela was South Africa's first black president. I know this is true since I remember when the event took place, and I am familiar with South Africa's history of apartheid. The details the article includes about Mandela's personal and political life, including the names and dates it mentions regarding his political action and his imprisonment all match with the same information in the <i>World Book</i> encyclopedia and in an article in the <i>Washington Post</i> .
C	Online, the obituary is nine pages long and includes details about every aspect of his life. For an obituary, it is quite in-depth. It includes the standard obituary content: the details of his birth and death and by whom he is survived. In addition, it provides a thorough overview of his lifetime struggles and accomplishments. For my purposes, this article provides all the background information I need. I would like to find a source that explains more about his

	early life and how he came to be so influential, but as it is, this article's level of depth and breadth are perfect for what I am doing.
O	The purpose of an obituary is generally to say nice things about of the life of the person who has died. Keller does this, but also presents a balanced view of Mandela, showing his triumphs, most notably his role in ending apartheid, and his failures. Although Mandela wanted equality for all the people in South Africa, at the end of his term as president and still today, many black South African live in poverty, in shacks in crowded, dirty townships. He was not able to fully realize his goals, and the article addresses this fact. In addition, the article includes information about accusations that the ANC, of which Mandela was an influential member and head, was a terrorist organization. This circumspect coverage of Mandela's life show that the author is working to be as unbiased as possible while still honoring Mandela.

Because every aspect of A-TACO checks out strongly, I am definitely going to use this source. I will look for one more source that goes into more depth about how Mandela became so influential.