The Credibility Challenge
Student Handout #1: Questions for Determining Authority

Web site questions:

- What is the site's top-level domain?
- Is the site hosted using a free platform such as Geocities, Blogger/Blogspot, Wordpress or Yahoo?

Author questions:

- What is the author's education level? Does he or she have a degree? From what school? In what subject?
- What is the author's previous writing experience?
- How much does the author probably know about the topic or topics on which he or she is writing? Does he or she deal intimately with this subject in daily life, or only research it for the purpose of writing about it? If relevant, has he or she performed experiments and independent research projects on this topic?
- Does the author have a neutral perspective on the site's subject matter, or is he or she trying to promote a particular viewpoint?
- Does the site have editors?

Sponsor questions:

- Is there an organization that is in charge of the site's content, or that funds the site's operation?
- Does this organization have an interest in the site's subject matter? Is it likely to want people to have a particular perspective on this topic? Might it encourage the author(s) and editor(s) to give a skewed presentation?