



Evaluating Source Authority: **The WHY Method**



Who was the author?

- **Anonymous** - No one takes credit, or labeled as “anonymous”
- **Nonprofessional** - The author has no demonstrated expertise.
- **Corporate Author** - No named authors; a corporation or organization is responsible
- **Academic-amateur** - The author has a graduate degree in another field, but is an amateur in this field
- **Professional or Journalist** - The author has significant professional expertise in this field, or else a degree and/or a year’s experience as a working journalist
- **Academic** - The author has a graduate degree (M.S.W., J.D., Ph.D., etc.) in this field



How was it edited?

- **Self-Published** - The author shared it directly with the public
- **Vanity Press** - The author paid someone to publish it for them
- **Wiki** - Multiple semi-anonymous people wrote/edited it collaboratively
- **Nonprofessionally Reviewed** - Someone other than the author reviewed it, but not a professional editor
- **Professionally Edited** - A professional editor (who has real credentials as a journalist) reviewed it
- **Peer-reviewed** - Academic scholars in this field reviewed it prior to publication



why was this published?

- **Personal** - Published for completely personal reasons
- **Commercial** - Published by a commercial organization, or with the purpose of making a profit
- **Non-profit** - Published by an officially non-profit organization or entity
- **Youth** - Published primarily for an audience of students in K-12 schools
- **Government** - Published by a governmental organization or entity
- **Higher Education** - Published by an institution of higher education, or primarily for a higher education audience