Using the Internet as a Source of Information

Learning About the Candidates
<u>Step One: Clarify your own ideas</u>
- Is there an issue that's important to you?
- What are the important things a government or political official does?
- What kind of a person should the candidate be?

<u>Step Two: Who's running for office?</u>
- See your county Board of Elections. They will list all candidates who will appear on the ballot.
- Wood County's Board of Elections website is: http://www.co.wood.oh.us/boe

<u>Step Three: Gather information</u>
- Printed material from the campaigns and parties
- Newspaper, radio, television
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Internet

Using the Internet

<u>A Warning about the Internet</u>: be very careful to enter the exact URL address of an organization. Many web sites use addresses very similar to those of other organizations.

<u>Questions to Ask</u>
- Authority
- Who is the author of the site?
- What are the author's credentials?
- How knowledgeable is the author?
- Who is the sponsor of the site?
- What is the purpose or intent of the organization?
    - Content
- What is the scope of this resource?
- Is the material free of errors? (typos and grammar mistakes should make you skeptical about the quality of the information, too)
- Where did the information come from?
- Does the material try to persuade you?
- Is the page promotional? (an ad or from the candidate)
- Could advertising on the page influence the content?
- Who is the intended audience?
-Is the information available in print or elsewhere?
    - Currency
- When was the site last updated?
- Are the links current and accurate?
- Does the site rely on the most current available information? If not, why not?
    - Format and Presentation
- Is the information easy to get to?
- Do the images improve or distract from the content?
- Does the site have its own search engine?
    - Cost and Accessibility
- Is the site always available?
- Is this a free site, or is there a cost?
- Do you have to register to use the site?
- Does the site rely on advertising to pay for itself?

<u>Statistics and Polls</u>
- Go to the *source*
- What were the questions?
- Who was asked?
- When was the data gathered?
- Are older figures available for comparison?
- Are figures interpreted correctly?