

## **The NAAFA Website: An Evaluation**

There are several criteria that must be evident in a resource from the internet in order for it to be considered a good resource for academic research. I believe that the website that I have found can be used as a useful one. I analyzed several features that the website exhibits. These categories include currency, usefulness and relevance to my topic, authority and credibility of the author and information, and bias.

I found that the website was current. At the bottom of the homepage is the copyright date of 2006, and the “latest news” refers to events in August of 2006. News items seem to be published quarterly, and the site contains archived news reports dating back to 2002, so it is possible to see the variety of topics this organization has addressed over time.

This website also proved itself to be very relevant and useful for the argumentative essay which my group chose. Our paper is going to argue whether or not obese Americans should receive special consideration. This is a website by the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, NAAFA. This is an organization that exposes prejudice against overweight people, for example, in child custody battles, in employment, and in medical care, and that advocates to and for these people. This is evident by articles such as “Airline Tips for Large Passengers” and “Declaration of Health Rights for Fat People.” NAAFA has developed a number of policies, on topics as varied as employment discrimination and weight loss drugs, and these policies are all detailed on the website. The site frequently mentions fat advocacy and human rights. The website also mentions several other similar organizations; the San Francisco Human

Rights Commission is one example. Following up by searching these different groups and organizations may provide additional information for our paper.

The authority and credibility of the site are fairly plausible. The website sometimes does not specify particular authors and sometimes does. There is a link to email the site's webmaster and also eight members of the NAAFA Board of Directors. The group does not seem to be associated with any government body, but there are several organizations associated with this group. The site also mentions some medical doctors who spoke at the NAAFA annual convention. The website includes background information on the group, that it is a nonprofit human rights organization that began in 1969. It's not just trying to sell something—it does offer membership in NAAFA and solicit donations—it is also an information and advocacy group. The site even offers access to an attorney, who offers a free legal consultation to overweight people dealing with prejudice.

The website does appear to be very biased. It is promoting the idea that being fat and unhealthy is okay. It supports several obese people who have been in court cases or are having a hard time, and it celebrates people like Louis Armstrong, Agatha Christie, Alfred Hitchcock, Babe Ruth, and Pearl Bailey. There are “special interest groups” that you can belong to, for example, the Supersize SIG, the Sleep Apnea SIG, and the Teen/Youth SIG, and a “Fat Activist Task Force,” all of which demonstrate the site's bias in support of overweight people and advocacy on their behalf.

Most all criteria were met to conclude that this website provides useful information about the issues faced by obese people and the reasons behind a wide range

of advocacy. We can definitely use the information in this website to show prejudice against obese people and some of what is being done to combat it.