

# Understanding Search Results

UWM Libraries

## Transcript

I'm learning more about different cultural experiences in Milwaukee, and I have started to explore information on aspects of Milwaukee's Latinx community. I've already organized what I know and now I'm going to search the web to build my understanding of this topic.

First, let's talk about where search results come from. Google uses algorithms to anticipate what I want to see in my search results. Algorithms, the instructions computer systems used to solve problems and complete tasks, alter the search results I see based on my profile data like my gender, age, and race; my search history; the device I'm using; and my geographic location. This means that even if we use the same search terms we're going to get different search results.

Additionally, just because a website appears on my first page of search results, doesn't mean that it's a good source for my topic. Because of this, I'll need to critically evaluate my search results.

Website titles can provide me with alternative search terms I haven't thought of, and they can give me clues about the author, audience, and purpose of a particular search result.

Website domains like .com, .edu, .gov, or .org can provide me with information about a site's sponsorship. While a URL ending in .com suggests private funding, a .gov URL means the content is usually publicly funded. Website funding won't tell me if a source is credible or good, however, it will provide me with context when identifying a site's creator, intended audience, or purpose.

I'm also going to pay attention to the text below each search result. This preview blurb will show me how my search terms are used in the context of the website, and it will also give me an idea of the type of content I'm about to view.

For example, the title of this website "WHSF/Mexican Fiesta" suggests there might be a cultural event in my city I could explore. This is further confirmed in the text preview below the search result. Finally, the .org domain of this website suggests that this content is hosted by a not-for-profit organization.

Evaluating my search results before linking out has given me a sense of the types of conversations going on around my topic. Now I'm ready to focus my inquiry.