Which information source is best?

- Read each scenario.
- Examine the information source options.
- Evaluate which information source is most appropriate and circle your choice.
- After you have circled your choice, read the feedback about the information sources on the next page.

Remember, there may be more than one correct answer. Your task is to choose the most appropriate answer.

**Scenario 1**
You are studying for a small business qualification. Your task is to choose a small business idea and to identify and analyse potential competitors. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.
A. The website of an existing business that could be a potential competitor.
B. Advertisement in trade magazine for similar business.
C. Bureau of Statistics report that cites the number of new small businesses that commenced in the previous financial year.
D. An article in a popular magazine about how someone else started up their own small business.

**Scenario 2**
You are researching emerging architectural trends in apartment living in capital cities worldwide. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.
A. Plans of current apartment developments being undertaken in your city.
B. International trade show for the building construction sector – keynote address, "Life in 2030."
C. Photographs of apartment complexes captured during a field trip around your city.
D. Online magazine article, "What does going green really mean? Global impacts of sustainability on residential design."

**Scenario 3**
You are researching the evolution of special effects in the film industry. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.
A. Movie review from a well-respected film critic.
B. Transcript of a radio interview with Richard Rickitt, author of Special Effects, and Tyruben Ellingson, who worked on Avatar, who discuss the evolution of special effects in films.
C. A blog where contributors talk about their favourite special effects movies of all time.
D. A report published in a trade magazine, Beyond 3D – the future of special effects in the film industry, completed by a team from a respected university.
Feedback for scenario 1
You are studying for a small business qualification. Your task is to choose a small business idea and to identify and analyse potential competitors. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.

A is the best option. Websites are useful sources for this research task because they often contain details about potential competitors including price, product range, target market and annual reports.

The other options are not the best choice in this case because:

B: Although an advertisement can help identify competitors, you cannot analyse them. A competitor's website is a better option because it often contains details about price, product range, target market and annual reports to assist in analysis.

C: The Bureau of Statistics is a reputable source of information but, in this case, the information is not specific or relevant to the research topic.

D: Articles in popular magazines can be appropriate sources of information. This particular article is too general and may provide useful background but will not assist in identifying and analysing competitors.

Feedback for scenario 2
You are researching emerging architectural trends in apartment living in capital cities worldwide. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.

D is the best option because it best suits the criteria of the research topic.

The other options are not the best choice in this case because:

A: Although plans of current local developments could be useful, the topic's focus is worldwide so it would need to be supplemented by examples in other cities. Plans of current developments may also not be indicative of emerging trends.

B: This source relates to future trends. The topic is focussed on emerging trends. Otherwise, this may have been an appropriate resource.

C: Although photographs of current local developments could be useful, the topic's focus is worldwide so it would need to be supplemented by examples in other cities. Photographs of current developments may also not be indicative of emerging trends.

Feedback for scenario 3
You are researching the evolution of special effects in the film industry. Choose the most appropriate information source from the list.

B is the best option. The sources used for the radio interview appear to be qualified and the assignment topic is directly addressed.

The other options are not the best choice in this case because:

A: A movie review is subjective and not relevant to this topic.

C: Blogs can be acceptable sources of information but are only appropriate when the contributors are qualified. In this case the entries are subjective and irrelevant.

D: This report, although published by a reputable source, refers to the future of special effects, not the evolution.

Need more help?
If you’re having difficulty finding scholarly and non-scholarly sources of information, your lecturer may be able to help. Library subject guides often recommend non-scholarly resources, but check with your lecturer if you’re not sure.