



ONLINE RESOURCE GUIDE

Incorrect source categorization is one of the more common pitfalls that lead into adjustments at the time of an audit. As a result of the availability and variety of online sources, we have been asked to clarify how sources should be classified on the BPA statement. Part of the confusion often lies with the lack of consistent naming by the providers of data.

1. **Association Rosters:** Many associations have online, searchable directories on their websites that allow unrestricted access to download files or selections of names. An example of this is the American Medical Association's "Doctor Finder", or the Better Business Bureau's online company search. Another example is seen with the American Water Works Association's *SOURCEBOOK: Service Provider's Member Directory*. All of these are online searchable membership guides, and should be classified as "Association Rosters and Directories" as they are listings of members to the association. Websites that offer access to membership rosters often end in ".org". Qualification dates should be the date indicated on the roster. If none is indicated, the downloaded date should be used.

2. **Business directories:** Many sites that advertise "business directories" are actually search engines that compile databases of businesses. These do not qualify under the BPA guidelines for business directories, which specify that the directory must be a public source, available in print CD-Rom format or digital format provided the digital directory is static. An example of this is India Mart's "Business Directory" which is a searchable database listing of export companies. A business directory usually specifies a single year; it is not an open file and is not updated and made public on an ongoing basis. Qualification date is the date of the directory. If none is available, the downloaded date should be used.

3. **Other sources:** Searchable databases come in many varieties – listings of names and addresses from telephone directories (such as 411.com or yellowpages.com), online lists (such as Pro-Net, a listing of small business contractors), or search engines (such as Business.com, Hoover's Online, Kompass.com). Qualification date should be the date indicated on the source. If none is indicated, the downloaded date should be used.

Many national, state, and local government sites allow you to download lists of names of different types of license holders. Examples are the Federal Aviation Authority's list of certified aviators, the State of Michigan's list of licensed automotive repair facilities, a list of licensed Chiropractors in Minnesota, or a listing of Real Estate licenses revoked by the State of New Jersey. Licensee lists are reported as other sources. Qualification date should be the date indicated on the list. If none is indicated, the downloaded date should be used.