



How Do I Evaluate a Website?

The Internet can be a great tool for doing research, but it is necessary to evaluate websites to insure their quality and accuracy. Below are some aspects to consider.

Key Areas to Review

ACCURACY

- Is the information reliable and correct?
- Is there an editor who verifies the information?

Anyone can publish anything on the Web, and there are no web standards for accuracy.

AUTHORITY

- Is there an author? What are his or her qualifications?
- What is the sponsoring organization? Is it reputable?
- Is the domain appropriate for the search (.edu, .com, .gov, .org, .net, etc.)?

*Look for links providing information about the author and his or her e-mail address.
Check for "about us," "philosophy," etc. for information about the organization.*

OBJECTIVITY

- Does the website show a minimum of bias?
- Is there advertising on the page?
- What is the purpose of the site? To sell, to inform, to persuade?

CURRENCY

- Does the site include the dates it was created and updated?
- How current are the links? Have any expired or moved?

Consider if currency is especially important for the research topic.

COVERAGE

- How does the site compare with other sites on this topic?
- Is material covered in depth rather than superficially?
- Is there a balance of text and images?
- Is the site readily viewable, not needing special software or requiring a fee?

The site should contribute something unique to the subject.

Additional Resources

Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

OWL at Purdue University: Evaluating Internet Sources
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_evalsource4.html