

Evaluating Web Information Guide

The following are some things to consider when looking at Web Sites. Do you really believe this source? Why? It's as easy to put bad information up on the Web as it is to put good information up. How do you tell the difference? Developing a healthy skepticism and the skills to critically analyze information will help you sort through the tons of information you can find on the web. Things to look for when evaluating a web site are: Author/Authority, Purpose/Point of View, Accuracy, Currency, Site Organization and the site Design.

Author/Authority

Is it clear who the author is? Are the author's qualifications stated? Is this person really an expert? Is there a way to contact the author for more information?

Purpose/Point of View

Is the author trying to sell you something or convince you of something? Does the author have a reason to lie, exaggerate, or only tell you part of the story?

What type of page is it?

.org - Organizational – purpose is to promote the organization

.com - Business – sell products

.edu - Educational – promote learning, but watch for student homepages

.gov - Governmental – inform citizens

Accuracy

Does the information appear to be reliable and correct? Do you see errors? Are sources listed?

Currency

Does the site state when it was first created? Does the site indicate when it was last revised? Last updated?

Organization of Information/ Navigability

Can you tell from the first page how the site is organized? Are links easy to identify?

Are links logically grouped? Is there a Site Index (a 'text' overview of all the information) on the site?

Does the site have its own search engine for searching within the site? Are there 'dead' links; i.e. links to 'nowhere'?

Design

Do the type styles and background make the page clear and readable? Do the graphics and images enhance the text or are they distracting? Is the layout consistent from page to page?