



Evaluating A Website

Unlike library books, web pages may be published by anyone. It is important to evaluate the quality of the web pages before using them for your research. Look for the following:

Authority

- Can you identify the person(s) or organization responsible for creating and developing the web page? Use clickable links or tabs that may lead to more information about the author or sponsoring organization or truncate the URL (web address) to find the “parent” web page.
- Is it clear who wrote the material and are the author’s qualifications for writing about this topic clearly stated? You might do a “google” search on the author’s name to get additional information if needed.
- What does the Domain (.edu .com .org .gov) or URL tell you?
- Is it a Personal Page? (~NAME in the URL may indicate a personal page)
- Is there a way of verifying the legitimacy of the page’s sponsor? Is there a phone number or postal address (an email address is not enough). Is there a copyright statement?

Accuracy

- Can you verify the facts in another source?
- Is the information free of grammatical, spelling and typographical errors?
- Is it clear who has responsibility for the information?

Objectivity

- To what extent is the information trying to *sway the opinion* of the audience?
- Is there an evident slant or bias?
- Does the page try to sell product? Is there advertising on the page?

Currency

- When was the page first placed on the web, updated or revised?
- If the material is presented in graphs and/or charts, is the date that the data was gathered clearly stated?
- Are there any other indications that the material is kept current?

Coverage

- Does the web page appear to be complete or still under construction?
- If there is a print equivalent of the web page, is the web version as complete?
- Can you tell what topic(s) the page intends to cover and does it succeed?
- Is the information clearly presented and well supported?

WEBSITES TO HELP EVALUATE WEB PAGE QUALITY

American Library Association

www.ala.org/acrl/undwebev.html

Duke Libraries

www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/evaluating_web.htm

UC Berkeley Library

www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html

UCLA College Library

www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/critical/

Widener University Wolfgram Memorial Library

www.widener.edu/Tools_resources?Libraries?wolfgram_Memorial_Library/Evaluate_Web_Pages/659