

EVALUATING INTERNET RESOURCES

WEBSITE ADDRESS:

Evaluating Internet Resources

Georgetown University Library – Internet resources
(www.library.georgetown.edu/internet/eval.htm)

Unlike similar information found in newspapers or television broadcasts, information available on the Internet is not regulated for quality or accuracy; therefore, it is particularly important for the individual Internet user to evaluate the resource or information. Keep in mind that almost anyone can publish anything they wish on the Web.

It is often difficult to determine authorship of Web sources, and even if the author is listed, he or she may not always represent him or herself honestly, or he or she may represent opinions as fact. The responsibility is on the user to evaluate resources effectively.

I. Test Your Evaluation Skills - Ask yourself these questions before using resources from the World Wide Web:

A. Author

1. Is the name of the author/creator on the page?
2. Are his/her credentials listed? (occupation, years of experience, position or education)
3. Is the author qualified to write on the given topic? Why?
4. Is there contact information, such as an e-mail address, somewhere on the page?
5. Is there a link to a homepage?
6. If there is a link to a homepage, is it for an individual or for an organization?
7. If the author is with an organization, does it appear to support or sponsor the page?
8. What does the domain name/URL reveal about the source of the information, if anything?
9. If the owner is not identified, what can you tell about the origin of the site from the address?

B. Purpose - Knowing the motive behind the page's creation can help you judge its content.

1. Who is the intended audience?
2. What does the site attempt to do?
3. If not stated, what do you think is the purpose of the site? Is the purpose to:

C. Objectivity

1. Is the information covered fact, opinion, or propaganda?
2. Is the author's point-of-view objective and impartial?
3. Is the language free of emotion-rousing words and bias?
4. Is the author affiliated with an organization?
5. Does the author's affiliation with an institution or organization appear to bias the information?
6. Does the content of the page have the official approval of the institution, organization, or company?

D. Accuracy

1. Are the sources for factual information clearly listed so that the information can be verified?
2. Is it clear who has the ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the content of the material?
3. Can you verify any of the information in independent sources or from your own knowledge?
4. Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
5. Is the information free of grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors?

E. Reliability and Credibility

1. Why should anyone believe information from this site?
2. Does the information appear to be valid and well-researched, or is it unsupported by evidence?
3. Are quotes and other strong assertions backed by sources that you could check through