

## WEB Site Evaluation Guide

### 1. Is the Web document/site authoritative?

- Who wrote and/or sponsors the Web document or page?
- Is the author an authority? Are the author's credentials/qualifications and biographical listed? (Know the difference between author and Webmaster.) Are the author and sponsoring organization clearly associated?
- Is the sponsoring organization reputable? Check for a preferred domain (.edu, .gov, .mil, or .org).
- Is this a personal Web site? Check the URL for a tilde (~) which indicates a personal Web page.

### 2. How accurate is the Web document/site's content?

- Can the information be verified or clarified? Is contact information for the author or sponsoring organization available (email, mailing address, phone number)? Remember: anyone can publish on the Web.
- Are sources cited? Are external links to the sources included? Is there a link from the author's page to the sponsoring organization? Are the links current?
- Is the information scholarly, edited, or peer-reviewed?
- Is the information well written and free of typographical errors?

### 3. Is this Web document/site objective?

- What is the purpose of this Web site? (Is it informational? Is it a personal Web page? Does it try to sell you something? Does it try to influence your opinion? Is it for entertainment?)
- Does the author or sponsoring organization state biased opinions?

### 4. How current is the Web site?

- Is a publication date listed?
- When was the last update/revision? Look for the wording *last update*.
- Do all the external links work?

### 5. Does the Web site thoroughly cover my topic?

- Who is the intended audience? (Child, student, adult, professional?)
- Does the information present in-depth information?
- Is the information too simple or too difficult?
- Is there a fee or special software required to obtain the information?
- Are links to other relevant Web sites included?

Links to other Web evaluation guides:

Purdue University CORE (Comprehensive Online Research Education)  
<http://gemini.lib.purdue.edu/core/default.cfm>

Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab)  
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_evalsource.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_evalsource.html)

Cornell University Library  
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webeval.html>

Adapted in part from:

- Beck, Susan. "Evaluation Criteria." *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: or, Why It's a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources*. 1997. New Mexico State University <<http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html>>.
- Gardner, Susan A. and Hiltraut H. Benham and Bridget M. Newell. "Oh, what a tangled web we've woven! Helping students evaluate sources." *English Journal*, Sept. 1999: 39-44.
- Kapoun, Jim. "Teaching Undergrads WEB Evaluation: A Guide for Library Instruction." *C & R News*. July/Aug. 1998. 5 Jan. 2006 <<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crlnews/backissues/1998/julyaugust6/teachingundergrads.htm>>.