

Evaluating Web Resources

The ability to evaluate information is especially important when using the Web since it is a self-publishing medium. Some web sites are created by an expert or by a group of experts, while others are created by laypersons or amateurs. Many web sites are regularly updated or maintained, others are one-time efforts. Each of the criteria on this list should contribute to the evaluation of a website and its information.

Authorship	Authors should be identified, listing their background or credentials (PhD, MD, director, etc.)
Currency	Dates should be provided and should be appropriate to the researcher (you). Does it say when the site was last updated?
Audience	The intended audience should be obvious (professionals, fans, educators, specialists).
Publisher, Source	The publisher or source, are the individuals/groups that provide some of the authority of the web site. Is the web site affiliated with a reputable source?
Scope	Biases and affiliations should be evident, including commercial affiliations. Is the material presented from a particular point of view, given the author or sponsor?
Purpose	Is the purpose to inform, persuade or promote?
Quality of Content	Content should be current, verifiable, documented, and accurate. Information should be detailed enough to be appropriate to a research paper topic. Is information consistent? Is there a list of references?
Organization of Information	Information should be well organized and easy to follow with reliable links. The web site should be easy to navigate.
Style and Tone	Style and tone should be appropriate to the topic.
Stability	Web sites and their information should be stable. Changes in information (updates) should be indicated. Would you consider this web site one that you would consult again?
Recommendations	Are there links to the website from other reputable sites?