

EVALUATING INTERNET RESOURCES

With millions of documents on the Internet, there's plenty of information to choose from. Be sure to look at your results carefully and remember that some web pages are written by experts and some are written by those with little or no knowledge on the subject. When evaluating the information you find, ask yourself the following questions....

	Criteria	How can you tell?
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the page signed?</i> • <i>Are the author's qualifications available?</i> • <i>Does the author have expertise on the subject?</i> • <i>Is the author associated with an educational institution or other reputable organization?</i> • <i>Does the publisher or publication have a reputation for reliability?</i> • <i>Is contact information for the author or group available on the site?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look at the bottom of the web page for clues.</i> • <i>Look for a link to a main web site for the group/educational organization hosting the web page.</i> • <i>Look at the first part of the URL for the web page. Is it .edu, .org, .gov, .net or .com?</i> • <i>Does the author or host have a web page explaining who they are and what their mission is?</i>
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the information reliable?</i> • <i>Is there an editor or someone who verifies/checks the information?</i> • <i>Is the page free of spelling errors or other obvious mistakes?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read through/scan the web page and consider the information.</i> • <i>Ask a Reference Librarian if the information you have found can be verified elsewhere.</i>
Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the web page dated?</i> • <i>Can you find when the latest update was done?</i> • <i>Are the links current and do they point to existing pages?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look at the bottom of the page for a recent date.</i> • <i>Read through and scan the text to see if the author attributes information/facts to a certain date/year.</i> • <i>Scan through the bibliography or list of references to see how current each item is.</i>
Objectivity vs. Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the author being objective or biased?</i> • <i>Is the page a presentation of facts and not designed to sway opinion?</i> • <i>Is the page free of advertisements and/or sponsored links?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read through/scan the web page and consider the content.</i> • <i>Does the author have a web page explaining who they are and what their mission is?</i> • <i>See what other websites link to the site in question.</i>
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the information pertinent to your topic?</i> • <i>Is the information useful to you?</i> • <i>Does the web page have information that is not found elsewhere?</i> • <i>How in-in depth is the material?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read through/scan the web page and consider.</i> • <i>Ask a Reference Librarian if the information you have found is relevant to your topic.</i>