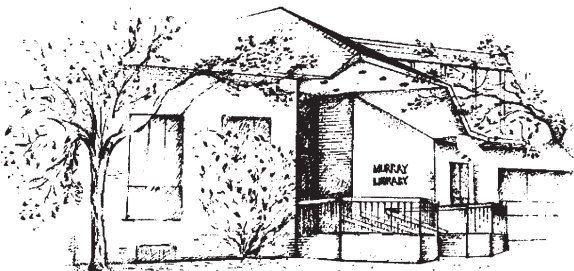


Evaluating World Wide Web Information

Unlike most print resources such as magazines and journals that go through a filtering process (e.g. editing, peer review), information on the World Wide Web (Web) and the Internet is mostly unfiltered. So using and citing information found over the Web is a little like swimming on a beach without a lifeguard. The following guide and checklist provide a starting point for evaluating World Wide Web sites and other Internet information.

ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING A WEBSITE:

- Author or contact person (usually located in the footer)
- Link to local home page (usually located in either header or footer)
- Institution (usually located in either header or footer)
- Date of creation or revision (usually located in footer)
- Intended audience (determined by examining the body)
- Purpose of the information, i.e. does it inform, explain, or persuade (determined by examining the body)



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WEBSITE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Based on the information you find, evaluate the piece based upon the following checklist.

AUTHOR (Authority)

- Who is the author of the piece?
- Is the author the original creator of the information?
- Does he/she list his/her occupation, years of experience, position or education?
- With what organization or institution is the author affiliated?
- With this information, or lack of it, do you feel this person is qualified to write on the given topic?

PUBLISHER; SPONSOR; INSTITUTION; OR HOME PAGE (Authority)

- What institution (company, government, university, etc.), publisher, or sponsor provides this information? To aid in determining the source, some common extensions found in U.S. URLs (Internet addresses) are:
 - .com...commercial site
 - .edu...educational site
 - .gov...government site
 - .mil...military site
 - .org...professional organization or association site
- If it is a commercial Internet provider, does the author appear to have any affiliation with a larger institution?
- Does the author's affiliation with this institution appear to bias the information?

DOCUMENT INFORMATION (Accuracy, Currency, Objectivity, and Purpose)

- When was the information created or last updated? Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?
- Does the information update other sources, substantiate other materials you have read, or add new information?
- Are there editors or fact checkers? Does the sponsoring institution appear to filter the information appearing under its name?
- What appears to be the purpose for this information (e.g., to inform or explain; to persuade)?
- What type of audience is the author addressing (e.g., general, scholarly)?
- Does the information appear to be objective and impartial, or biased and partisan?

CONCLUSION

- Given all the information you have determined from the above analysis, is this piece of information appropriate for your topic?

*Adapted from materials by Ann Sholz, Purdue University Libraries
(<http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu/research/classes/gs175/3gs175/evaluation.html>)*