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)
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 Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?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)