Why Evaluate Internet Resources?

Both the Internet and the World Wide Web (www) have a lot to offer when doing research. However, you must remember that not all sources are created equally. Some may be of more value to you than others, and some may be worthless. The following table outlines the criteria that you will want to use when evaluating various Internet sites.

What Criteria Should I Use?

The following criteria offer examples of the kinds of things you should be looking for when evaluating Internet and www sources. If you are having a hard time identifying these criteria on a specific site, you may want to abandon the site and try another.

Accuracy

☐ Is the information reliable?
☐ Are the sources of information clearly identified...can they be verified?
☐ Is it apparent that an editor or author exists and that the information is checked for accuracy?

Authority

☐ Who says? Is the author a recognized authority on the topic?
☐ What are the author's credentials or qualifications? Are they stated?
☐ Is the author affiliated with a reputable organization, such as a university or a government or non-profit agency?

Up-to-date

☐ Is the site kept up-to-date?
☐ When was the site last updated?

Objectivity

☐ Does the content show bias?
☐ Is the site trying to sell something?

Scope

☐ Who is the intended audience?
☐ What is covered? What is missing?
☐ Will this site be there tomorrow? Next year?

Ease of use

☐ Can you find the information you need or is the site difficult to navigate and hard to read?
☐ Is there a search tool or a site map?

Be a life-long-learner: Learning to critically evaluate new information (whatever the source) will help you to become a better student and will help you to be a successful learner throughout your life.