

Five Criteria for Evaluating Web Pages

Evaluation of Web Documents	How to Interpret the Basics
<p>1. Accuracy of Web Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her? What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced? Is this person qualified to write this document? 	<p>Accuracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/ phone number. Know the distinction between author and Webmaster
<p>2. Authority of Web Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who published the document and is it separate from the Webmaster? Check the domain of the document. What institution publishes this document? Does the publisher list his or her qualifications? 	<p>Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What credentials are listed for the author? Where is the document published? Check URL domain (.org = organization like Republican Party; .edu = educational institution like the University of Washington; .gov = government agency like Washington State Senate).
<p>3. Objectivity of Web Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What goals/objectives does this page meet? How detailed is the information? What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author? 	<p>Objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if the page is a mask for advertising; if so, the information may be biased. View any web page as you would an infomercial on television. Ask yourself why was this written and for whom?
<p>4. Currency of Web Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When was it produced? When was it updated? How up-to-date are the links (if any)? 	<p>Currency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the information outdated? Is there an indication of when the page was last updated? How many dead links are on the page?
<p>5. Coverage of the Web Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the links (if any) evaluated and do they complement the document's theme? Is it all images or a balance of text and images? Is the information presented cited correctly? 	<p>Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If page requires special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don't have the software? Is it free or is there a fee to obtain the information? Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

Putting it all together

- Accuracy.** If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her, and...
- Authority.** If your page lists the author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, .gov, .org for example), and...
- Objectivity.** If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information, and...
- Currency.** If your page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date, and...
- Coverage.** If you can view the information properly—not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement, then...

You may have a higher quality web page that could be of value to your research!