

Evaluating Web Information

The more questions you can answer, the more reliable the web site.

WHO is the author of the information? WHO is the host or sponsor of the web site?

- *What information do they provide about themselves?*
- *Can you contact them? Is there an e-mail address? Do they list a street address?*
- **If you can't tell who is behind it...don't use it!**

WHY was the site created? Does it have a specific purpose?

- *Does it state a purpose or mission? What is it? To sell? To inform? To persuade? Other? (Look for an "About Us" link.)*
- *What type of site is it?*
.com = commercial .net = network
.gov = government .org = non-profit organization
.edu = educational ~(tilde) = personal web page

WHAT is the point of view?

- *Is there any bias or slant? Or, is it neutral?*
- *Are there links to other viewpoints? Or, does it present both sides of the issue?*

HOW credible is the source?

- *Does the author or organization have expertise on the topic? What education, degrees, or work experience does the author have?*
- *Who is the intended audience? College students? Consumers? Children?*
- *Is it scholarly—that is, written by a researcher or expert for a college or academic audience?*
- *Are the sources credited with a bibliography, works cited list, or references?*
- *Are there any obvious errors or misinformation? Is it a collaborative site such as Wikipedia to which anyone can post or edit information?*

WHEN was it last updated?

- *Is the information current? When was it last revised? What is the copyright date?*
- *Are there many broken links?*

WHERE can I find more information?

- *What can you find out about the author or site using other Internet sources or library reference materials? Some suggestions are ipl2 (www.ipl.org), Contemporary Authors, Gale Biography in Context, Encyclopedia of Associations, and Magazines for Libraries.*