

Evaluating a website

Why should you evaluate a web page you are just about to use for a project?

The reason is simple. There is no police on the World Wide Web who deletes, corrects or evaluates what is there. Therefore the job is yours to do.

Websites are a great source of quick information on a variety of topics but anyone can go on the internet and create a page on the web. Wikipedia is also a great source of information when you are looking for a quick answer but anyone can go on Wikipedia and change everything at any time. You might think that this is good if pages on Wikipedia are constantly up-dated. Yes, but who is updating the page and who wrote the article in the first place?

An expert or a grade 7 student from the local Elementary school?

In the end, you have to decide if the information is accurate, up-to-date and useful to you.

If you take a few minutes to look at the web site you want to use and apply the following five criteria to evaluating Web pages, your chances of creating a better project will be improved.

Five quick and easy Criteria to evaluate a Webpage

- **Accuracy.** Is the information accurate? Check your information against other sources. Do not use a single source.
- **Authority.** Who is the author of the site? Is it an individual, an institution, government, a company, etc.? Some domains may be better than others.

Might be better

- .edu = Higher Learning Institutions (Universities)
- .gov = Government
- .org = Non-profit organizations

Be careful

- .com. = Business

If you see this symbol in a URL , ~, it indicates that the site was created by an individual. Check his/her background.

Look at the address (URL) of the website for any useful information.

- **Objectivity.** If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information. If it is a company webpage, is it objective and free of bias?
- **Currency.** If the Web page current and updated and are the links working and are they also up-to-date.
- **Coverage.** Is there enough information on the webpage to be useful?

To quickly evaluate a Web page, use the following questionnaire. The more times you answer yes to the questions, the better the Web page may be. If you check mark many BEWARE, make a decision to either abandon this page or make sure you check the facts with another websites, books, or encyclopedia.

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Answer the following questions to evaluate the site you are using.

Address of the Web page evaluated (URL) _____

YES

- 1- Does the address of the site give useful information about who published the site ? _____

Check one of the following.

Is it published by

a non-profit organization, (.org) _____

a government agency, (.gov) _____

a University?(.edu) _____

a business (.com) (Is it objective?) **(BEWARE)** * _____

or is it a personal site?(~) (Opinion) **(BEWARE)** * _____

2. Did you check the links embedded in the site? _____

Do these links help you understand the site? _____

Are these links dead links? **(BEWARE)** * _____

Are the links current and up-dated? _____

3. Does the website has an author? _____

Did you check his/her background? _____

Does his/her background relate to the topic of his website? _____

4. Does the site give information? _____

Does it advocate ideas? (opinion) **(BEWARE)** * _____

Does it sell products/services? **(BEWARE)** * _____

5. Is there enough information given for the site to be useful? _____

6. When was the site created? _____

When was the site up-dated? _____

7. Are the images and the text balanced? _____

Count the number of **YES**. The more the better. /11

Count the number of **BEWARE**. The least the better /5