

Criteria for Evaluation

Evaluate the quality of information found on the web as well as other information resources such as books, magazines, CD-ROM, and television. Be skeptical of everything you find. Compare and contrast different information resources. Consider the following ideas:

Authority. Who says? Know the author.

- Who created this information and why?
- Do you recognize this author or their work?
- What knowledge or skills do they have in the area?
- Is he or she stating fact or opinion?
- What else has this author written?
- Does the author acknowledge other viewpoints and theories?

Objectivity. Is the information biased? Think about perspective.

- Is the information objective or subjective?
- Is it full of fact or opinion?
- Does it reflect bias? How?
- How does the sponsorship impact the perspective of the information?
- Are a balance of perspectives represented?
- Could the information be meant as humorous, a parody, or satire?

Authenticity. Is the information authentic? Know the source.

- Where does the information originate?
- Is the information from an established organization?
- Has the information been reviewed by others to insure accuracy?
- Is this a primary source or secondary source of information?
- Are original sources clear and documented?
- Is a bibliography provided citing the sources used?

Reliability. Is this information accurate? Consider the origin of the information.

- Are the sources truth worthy? How do you know?
- Who is sponsoring this publication?
- Does the information come from a school, business, or company site?
- What's the purpose of the information resource: to inform, instruct, persuade, sell? Does this matter?
- What's their motive?

Timeliness. Is the information current? Consider the currency and timeliness of the information.

- Does the page provide information about timeliness such as specific dates of information?
- Does currency of information matter with your particular topic?
- How current are the sources or links?

Relevance. Is the information helpful? Think about whether you need this information.

- Does the information contain the breadth and depth needed?
- Is the information written in a form that is usable (i.e. reading level, technical level)?
- Is the information in a form that is useful such as words, pictures, charts, sounds, or video?
- Do the facts contribute something new or add to your knowledge of the subject?
- Will this information be useful to your project?

Efficiency. Is this information worth the effort? Think about the organization and speed of information access.

- Is the information well-organized including a table of contents, index, menu, and other easy-to-follow tools for navigation?
- Is the information presented in a way that is easy to use (i.e., fonts, graphics, headings)?
- Is the information quick to access?