

Evaluating Online Information

<p style="text-align: center;">Who</p> <p>Does the information come from a knowledgeable, trustworthy source?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author identified? • Is the author from an organization related to the topic? • Does the author's background indicate experience or expertise in the subject area? • Is there contact info for the author, including postal address, phone, and e-mail? • Does the site publisher have a good reputation?
<p style="text-align: center;">What</p> <p>Is the information useful and of high quality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the information accurate and consistent with what you know about the subject? • Are real, high-quality sources cited? • Are the grammar and spelling correct? • Are the language and tone appropriate for the subject? • Do external links connect to appropriate, high-quality sites? • Is the subject covered broadly and/or deeply enough for your needs? • Is the information relevant to your research topic?
<p style="text-align: center;">Where</p> <p>Is the source appropriate for your topic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a personal page? (If yes, evaluate the author's background carefully) • What is the domain type (e.g., .com, .org, .edu)? Is that appropriate for your topic? • Where is the site hosted (e.g., AOL, Geocities, Comcast)? Is that appropriate for the topic?
<p style="text-align: center;">When</p> <p>Is the information current enough for your topic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the information gathered? • What ranges of dates are covered? • What ranges of dates are not covered? • When was the page created or last updated? • Are there signs that the site is updated regularly? • Is the information current enough for your research needs?
<p style="text-align: center;">Why</p> <p>Does the site have a purpose or bias that is inconsistent with your research needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the goal of the site clearly stated? • Is the audience of the site identified? • Are biases clearly stated? • Is the information balanced? • Do external links represent other viewpoints? • Do references include balanced, objective sources or those from other viewpoints?
<p style="text-align: center;">How</p> <p>Is the site easy to use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the design style appropriate for the topic? • Is the language readable and understandable? • Does the site load quickly? • Do links work correctly? • Do the graphics enhance the information? • Are the colors pleasing to the eye? • Are the fonts readable and used consistently?