

Evaluation Strategies

Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find the author’s credentials, look around the edges of the page for links that say “About us,” “Background,” “Biography.” • Look for the name of the publisher/server, usually in the first portion of the URL between http:// and the next / • Truncate the URL: Delete the end character of the URL, stopping before each / (leave the slash). Press enter to see if you can see more about the author or the publisher. • Find out what others say about the author or publisher by looking up the name in Google; try the search a variety of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Without quotes ○ Enclosed in quotes as a phrase ○ Enclosed in quotes with * between the first and last name (* takes the place of any middle initial)
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for spelling and grammatical errors. • Look for footnote numbers or links that refer to additional documentation. • Make sure any references are real; on the web it’s easy to create fake citations.
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for a personal name following a tilde (~) or percent sign (%). Look for the words “users”, “members”, or “people.” These are signs of personal pages. Investigate the author very carefully. • Look for the host name (usually immediately before the period preceding the domain name, e.g., aol.com). Free servers like AOL, Geocities, or Yahoo can indicate a personal page. Investigate the author very carefully. • Examine the domain, and consider whether it is the most reliable source for your information need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government sites: .gov, .mil, .us, or other country code ○ Educational sites: .edu ○ Nonprofit organizations: .org ○ Businesses: .com ○ Internet service provider: .net
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for “last updated” – usually at the bottom of the page. • Check the date on all pages of the site. • Review the dates mentioned within the page. Do they start or stop at a certain day, month, or year? • Within the page, look for mention of a current event to indicate how recently the site was updated.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find a description of the site’s purpose or audience, look around the edges of the page for links that say “About us,” “Mission,” “Goals.” • Look for language or design elements that could indicate bias or opinion: extreme points of view, exaggeration, large type, bright colors, animation. • Click on the links and evaluate the quality of the sites the page is linking to. Do they show signs of bias? Are they balanced and objective? • You’re only as good as the company you keep. Evaluate the pages that link to this page by doing a link search in Google: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Copy the URL of the page ○ Go to Google ○ In the Google search box, type link: and paste the URL immediately after the colon (no space) ○ The pages listed all contain one or more links to the page you are evaluating. Do they show signs of bias? Are they balanced and objective? • Look for the page in a reputable subject directory (such as lii.org, ipl.org, about.com) and read the review of the site.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for too bright colors or annoying animation. • Click on the links to make sure they work and go the expected location. • Look for a direct relationship between the images and the text.

