How to Evaluate Internet Sources

Anyone can create a website on the Internet. There is **no formal evaluation process**. When searching the Web, **you** will have to evaluate the websites you find. Use this list to help you do that.

Currency
- Is the information provided current?
- Is the page being maintained? Check the bottom of the page for a date.
- Do the links work and are they current?

Reliability
- **Databases and links to websites found on Library pages have been checked and can be trusted to be reliable.**
- Websites located through a search engine like Google or Yahoo may not be accurate or current, evaluate them carefully.
- If the website was recommended by a faculty member, cited in a scholarly or credible source, or linked from a credible website, it should be reliable.

Authority
- Who is the author of the site?
- Does the author list credentials, such as affiliations, degrees or certifications?
- Is the site affiliated with a reputable organization?
- Is there contact information on the site?

Accuracy
- Is the vocabulary professional or casual? Are there spelling and grammar errors?
- Is the information factual, opinion or propaganda?
- Are there sources, citations or a bibliography?
- Is the website objective or is there a particular point of view or bias?
- Does the page contain advertising? Are advertisements disguised as information?

Purpose
- What is the purpose of the website? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Does the website support a particular political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal agenda?
- The domain in the URL can provide clues about the site's purpose. Some common domains are:
    - **.org** : An advocacy organization site. It may have biases.
    - **.com** : A business or commercial site. They are trying to sell something.
    - **.edu** : A site affiliated with a college or university.
    - **.gov** : A site sponsored by a federal government agency.