



Library and Media Center

EVALUATING INFORMATION SOURCES

Relevancy

- Is the information provided on target for your specific information needs?
- Is the content appropriate for a college-level paper?

Authority

- What information is provided about the author's credentials?
- Is the author qualified in the subject covered?
- Is the author affiliated with a reputable institution or scholarly publisher?
- What are the goals/values of the sponsoring institution?
- Is the author mentioned in or linked from another trustworthy source?
- Is a Web site part of an official site or on a personal account? Check for clues like a ~ in the URL, which is often associated with personal Web pages.

Accuracy

- Could the information be verified in other sources?
- Is there a bibliography that indicates the author's sources of information?
- Is the author's methodology presented?
- Is the information original or reprinted/excerpted from another source?
- If you are using multiple sources, how does the source compare with others on the topic?

Currency

- Is there a date listed for the information?
- When was the information last revised?
- How up-to-date are the links in a Web site or the citations in a bibliography?
- Does the topic require very current information?
- Is an edition listed?

Point of View/Objectivity

- Who is providing the information or sponsoring the site?
- Can you independently confirm that this is a legitimate, reputable organization?
- What does the Web address tell you about the site? (commercial, educational, government, organizations, personal?)
- What's the objective of the site? (to inform, persuade/promote a point of view, or sell something?)
- Is the language objective and neutral or exaggerated and inflammatory?
- Does the information seem based in fact or is it someone's opinion?