

Web Page Evaluation

How do we evaluate a website? To answer this question, ask yourself the following:

1. Is the website relevant? (Filter the information)

- Is the information on this site related to my topic and useful?
- Why is it useful?
- Who is the intended audience?

2. What is the authority for the website? (Distill the information)

- Is this information written by an expert?
- Who wrote the page?
- What does the author say is the purpose for the site?
- Is the point of view fair or biased?

3. Is the website accurate and reliable? (Cross-reference the information)

- When was the site written, updated, or last worked on?
- Is it timeless information? (links work, revision dates clear)
- Is the source of information clearly posted?
- Triangulate the data- Did I find this information in at least 3 other sources?
- Is the spelling and grammar accurate?

Helpful Websites for Evaluation

EASYWHOIS: Discover information about who owns a website.

<http://easywhois.com/>

The Wayback Machine: On the front page, enter a website to explore the history and changes to a website over time.

<http://www.archive.org/index.php>

Google Advanced Search: Gives you more options when searching to limit the number of sites returned to you.

http://www.google.com/advanced_search

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Web Page Evaluation Checklist

Title of page you are evaluating:		Title of page you are evaluating:
1. Look at the URL		
Personal page or site?		
What type of domain is it? Appropriate for the content?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Published by entity that makes sense? Does it match the name of the site?		
2. Scan the perimeter of the page		
Who wrote the page?		
Dated?	Date _____ Current enough?	Date _____ Current enough?
Credentials on this subject? (Truncate back the URL if no useful links.)		
3. Examine the content		
Sources well documented?		
Complete? If 2nd-hand information, is it not altered or forged?		
Links to more resources? Do they work?		
Evidence of bias?		
4. What do others say?		
Who links to it? Hint: In Google search: <i>link:all.or.part.of.url</i>	Many or few links? Opinions expressed?	Many or few links? Opinions expressed?
Is the page rated well in a directory? www.lii.org or infomine.ucr.edu or about.com		
Which blogs link to it? What do they say? blogsearch.google.com		
Look up the author in Google		
5. Does it all add up?		
Why was the page put on the Web?	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <input type="checkbox"/> Persuade <input type="checkbox"/> Sell Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <input type="checkbox"/> Persuade <input type="checkbox"/> Sell Other:
Possibly ironic? Satire or parody?		

BOTTOM LINE: Is the web page appropriate for your purpose?

Teaching Library, UC Berkeley – Spring 2008

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