

# Internet Resource Evaluation

## “How-to” guide

### ■ The Internet for Research

The Internet is only **one** source of information. What it holds is not structured or organized; searching can be very time-consuming. Try other sources first such as **books published by reputable academic publishers** and **articles in refereed (peer-reviewed) journals**. Many of these books and journals are now available online.

Use the same evaluation techniques for Internet sources as you would for a book or article. Consider the points on the back of this page.

### ■ Be aware....

- Anyone can publish on the Internet. It's a **Virtual Soapbox**
- Work is not assessed or quality checked by a publisher
- You must judge the intended audience of the information
  - Scholars
  - General public
  - High school students
  - Children

### ■ Indicators of quality, if present

- |                                 |                              |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| ○ <b>An identifiable author</b> | ○ <b>Type of information</b> | ○ <b>Date</b>          |
| ○ <b>Credentials</b>            | ○ <b>Scope</b>               | ○ <b>Bibliography</b>  |
| ○ <b>Writing style</b>          | ○ <b>Purpose of web page</b> | ○ <b>Language used</b> |

### ■ How to cite internet sources

Follow the style recommended by your School or lecturer.

*You will usually need ~*

• Author's name as shown on page (if present)	• Date the page was last updated
• Full title	• Date you accessed the Web page
• Publisher (if known)	• URL (the Internet address of the page)

### ■ Some useful internet sites

Elizabeth Kirk. Evaluating information found on the Internet	<a href="http://www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/">http://www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/</a>
University of California, Berkeley, Library. Evaluating web pages	<a href="http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html">http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html</a>
Cornell University Library. Five criteria for evaluating web pages	<a href="http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webcrit.html">http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webcrit.html</a>

## More indicators of quality

### Author (s)

- Does the information have an author? Has the work been "signed"?
- If so, is there any information on the author's qualifications, educational background, past writings, etc?
- Has the author been mentioned by your lecturer?
- Can you identify an institution, if any, to which the author belongs?
- Is contact information for the author included?

### Credentials/Responsibility

- Do you know who authorized the publication, i.e. the publisher? Note: If the page is self-published, check the author's intentions for the page
- Look at the URL (web address). Are you looking at a Web page hosted by:
  - An educational institution
  - A commercial site
  - A government department
  - An organization
  - OR is it a personal Web page?

### Date

- Has the author dated the article?
- Has the information ever been updated?
- A web page date can mean:
  - The date the document was first written
  - The date the document was placed on the web
  - The date the document was last revised
- Will the page remain long term on the Web?

### Type of Information

- Does the information tie in with other information you have on the subject?
- Are conclusions drawn based soundly on evidence presented? (*Be sceptical if views or conclusions differ radically from those expressed elsewhere*)
- Does the text use graphs, photographs, images, etc. well?

### Scope

- Are all aspects of the subject covered in the document?
- Look at the level of detail
- What time period (if any) is covered?

### Purpose of article

- Has the document come from an official electronic journal or publisher?
- If self-published, is the text personal rather than objective in tone?
- Does it support an official group? E.g. Greenpeace
- What is the intended audience?
- Is it entertainment? Be aware of "Zines". "Fanzines" etc.
- Is the page trying to sell you something?
- Is the information contained on the site or are there constant links to other sites?

### Writing style

- Is the format and length appropriate for information level
- Is the text well written, using an appropriate style, e.g. analytical?

### Language used

Is the language used:

- elementary?
- inflammatory, sensational, emotional?
- serious – the language commonly used in the discipline?

### Bibliography

- Does the page have a bibliography?
- What type of references have been used to support the document
  - Scholarly?
  - Popular?



Ask at the **Information Desk** in any Branch Library or check the Library's

Web Page ~ <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/>