

## EVALUATING WEB PAGES

The Web can be an invaluable source of information, but it can also be a source of much misinformation. This means that students must develop critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate Web sites.

Periodical articles in full text in subscription-based databases such as InfoTrac should not be confused with Web pages. These articles are of precisely the same quality as those you find in the library print periodical collection.

Web pages should be evaluated in terms of the following:

### **Authority**

- Who is the author of the Website? Check the bottom of the page where a statement of responsibility may appear.
- Is the author an authority in the field? Is there an e-mail address or regular address/phone number where questions may be addressed?
- Who sponsors the website? Check the domain name to help determine the site's reliability and affiliation:
  - .edu - educational institution
  - .gov – government site
  - .org – nonprofit organization
  - .mil – military organization
  - .com – commercial website

### **Objectivity and Purpose**

- What is the purpose of the site? To inform? To persuade? To entertain? To sell something?
- Are opinions and facts clearly identified?
- Is the site free of advertising or is it a front for advertising?
- If the site discusses a controversial topic, does it discuss different points of view?
- Look for links such as “About Us,” “Our Mission,” “Who We Are”

### **Accuracy**

- Are sources provided so the information can be verified?
- Is it clear who is responsible for the content of the site?
- Know the difference between author and webmaster.

### **Currency**

- When was the site produced? Is it updated regularly?
- Are there links to other sites? Are they still active and useful?

## Web Directories

Use a reputable subject directory that selects sites for their research quality. Knowledgeable researchers review and evaluate websites before including them in directories.

Librarians' Index to the Internet

<http://lii.org>

Internet Public Library

[www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)

Digital Librarian

[www.digital-librarian.com](http://www.digital-librarian.com)

INFOMINE, Scholarly Internet Resource Collections

<http://infomine.ucr.edu>