



Evaluating Internet Resources

Points to Consider

Accuracy	<p>Is the information accurate when checked against other sources?</p> <p>How reliable and error-free is the information?</p> <p>Is there evidence of potential bias?</p> <p>Does the author have a specific agenda or point-of-view?</p>
Authority	<p>Is it clear who is sponsoring the web page? Is the sponsor legitimate?</p> <p>Is it clear who wrote the page?</p> <p>Are the qualifications of the author clearly stated?</p> <p>Is the author affiliated with an institution or organization?</p> <p>Is there contact information available for the author of the document?</p>
Content	<p>What is the purpose of the web page, i.e. to inform, convince, or sell?</p> <p>What does it contribute to the literature in the field?</p> <p>Who is the intended audience based on content, tone, and style?</p> <p>What is the overall value of the content compared to the range of resources on the topic?</p>
Coverage	<p>Does the site cover the subject adequately?</p> <p>Are there inexplicable omissions?</p>
Currency	<p>Is the publication date clearly stated?</p> <p>When was the page last revised? Is it maintained and updated regularly?</p> <p>Are the links on the page up-to-date and useable?</p>
Documentation	<p>Does the author explain where the information was obtained?</p> <p>Does the web page contain a bibliography or list of sources used?</p>

How to Tell the Difference Between Scholarly Work and Propaganda

Indicators of Scholarship	Indicators of Propaganda
Describes limits of research or data.	Excessive claims of certainty, i.e. one "right" way of thinking.
Presents accurate description of alternate viewpoints.	Relies on personal attacks and ridicule.
Encourages debate, discussion, and criticism.	Emotional appeals. Use of inflammatory language.
Settles disputes by use of generally accepted criteria for evaluating data.	Suppresses contradictory views.
Looks for counter-examples.	Appeals to popular prejudices.
Updates information.	Devalues critical appraisal.
Admits own ignorance.	Transforms words and statistics to suit purpose.
Relies on critical thinking skills	Presents information and views out of context.

Sources

Bodi, Sonia. "Scholarship or Propaganda: How Can Librarians Help Undergraduates Tell the Difference?" *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 21 (1995): 21-25.

Grassian, Esther. "[Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources](#)."

Jacobson, Trudi, and Laura Cohen. "[Evaluating Internet Resources](#)."

Tate, Marsha, and Jan Alexander. "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources." *Computers in Libraries* 16.10 (1996): 49-55.

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