



Evaluating Web Resources: The 3 R's

Ask yourself these questions to determine whether the information on a Web site is
Reputable, Relevant and Reliable:

Authority

Is the author well-known?

Is the site developed by an academic institution? (Is .edu part of the domain name?)

Accuracy

Does the author cite reliable sources for facts that are presented?

Is the content comparable to other works on the same subject?

Objectivity

Does the site reflect the opinions of a person or an organization?

Currency

Is the Internet version the most current available?

Is the site updated frequently and is a date included on the home page?

Coverage

What is the intended scope or purpose of the resource?

How much information is presented?

**These criteria and a series of checklists were developed by Reference Librarians Janet Alexander and Marsha Tate of Widener University Library. All materials are used with permission of the authors.*

Adapting the Checklist(s)* to Web Resources

Authority

1. Often difficult to determine authorship of Web sources.
2. If author's name is listed, qualifications are frequently absent.
3. Publisher is often not indicated.

Accuracy

1. Almost anyone can publish on the Web.
2. Many resources are not verified by editors and/or fact checkers.
3. Web standards to ensure accuracy have yet to be developed.

Objectivity

1. Goals and aims of person or groups are not often clearly stated.
2. Web can function as "virtual soapbox."

Currency

1. Dates are not always included.
2. If included, date may have various meanings.
 - a. Date when information was first written.
 - b. Date placed on Web.
 - c. Date last revised.

Coverage

1. Web coverage may differ from print.
2. Often hard to determine extent of Web coverage.

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