

### **Five Criteria for WEB Evaluation**

#### **1. Credibility and Affiliation**

- a. Since there are no editors or fact checkers on the web, how do we know information is reliable? On some websites the lines between fact and fiction can be difficult to determine.
- b. What is the domain name of the URL? Is it from a .com, .edu, .gov, or .org. and what does the domain stand for? Does the server institution or organization providing the information have credibility and why? How does a domain name help establish some validity?
- c. What is the intent of the web site and who is it written for? Is it to inform, market something, persuade, etc.

**Remember that almost anyone can publish on the WEB. There are no criteria or standards for publishing. It is like the 'wild west' of publishing.**

#### **2. Authorship**

- a. Is the page signed? Is there a separate person from the "webmaster."
- b. What are authors qualifications? Do the credentials match the field they are writing on?
- c. Who published the document? Is the information current on the site and is it reputable?

**Remember it may be difficult to determine authorship of WEB resources because there are no requirements.**

#### **3. Objectivity**

- a. What is the purpose of the page? Is it to educate, inform, advocate, sell, or entertain. How objective is the information presented? Is the information presented biased or is only one point of view being represented?
- b. How detailed is the information they are presenting? Is the information documented from reliable sources?
- c. Are the pages opinions, or documented facts. How are they expressed?

**It is important to try to determine why the information was written and who it was written for.**

#### **4. Currency**

- a. Is the content up-to-date? When was the page or site written? How up-to-date is the information on the page or site
- b. Are the links active and current on the site?

**Remember dates are not always included. Web Page may list date created or date placed on the Web, or date last revised. This may have nothing to do with content currency.**

#### **5. Coverage**

- a. Is the content error free?
- b. Is the information comprehensive or summarized. How long and detailed is the material presented? Is the information cited and is it documented correctly?
- c. Is the page complete or under construction?

#### ***Other Challenges Presented by Web Resources***

1. How many Hyperlinks does the page link to?
2. Web Pages can change or be revised at any time.
3. Certain plug-ins or software may be required to view the materials on the site
4. Is the information free or fee based?

Credit given to Jan Alexander and Marsha Ann Tate, Wolfgram Memorial Library, Widener University, Chester, PA 1998.  
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/undwebev/html>

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