



Evaluating Internet Resources

Since the Internet has no overall quality control standards, the responsibility for critically evaluating the information retrieved becomes very important and falls entirely on the user.

When doing research, the Internet should be used as one possible source of information, **not the only source**. A great deal of valuable information continues to be published **only** in books and periodicals.

Evaluation Criteria:

Authority

- Who wrote the page? Is the author's name listed?
- If the author is listed, are his or her credentials provided?
- Is the author an expert in the field?
- Is the site sponsored by a reputable organization?

Accuracy

- If you have any knowledge of the subject, does the content of the site seem accurate?
- Are sources cited in a bibliography?
- Are there obvious spelling or grammar errors? If so, do not use the page.
- Does the information found on the page correspond with what you have learned from other sources?

Objectivity

- If the page relates to a controversial topic, are both sides of the argument represented evenly?
- Many biased pages will feature strongly worded statements, which are often supported by evidence and documentation - often it is useful to locate the documented sources and draw your own conclusions about the issue.
- What is the purpose of the site?

Currency

- When was the information actually written?
- When was it last updated?
- How current are the links?

Coverage

- Is the coverage in-depth or superficial?
- Who is the intended audience? Subject experts with advanced college degrees or elementary school children? Be sure to use an appropriate source.

What does the URL mean?

The URL is the Web address for the site. For example, the URL for JCC's site is www.sunyjefferson.edu .

The 3 letter suffix (or domain) identifies the type of site to some degree and may help you determine the quality of the information found there:

.edu	educational institution
.mil	military site
.gov	government
.net	internet infrastructure site **
.com	commercial or personal site **
.org	generally nonprofit organization **
.int	international treaty organizations

****It is important to note that any individual, organization or company can choose to register their Web address as .com, .net or .org. In fact, they can register for all three.**