

Inver Hills Community College Library

Criteria for Evaluating Websites

QUESTIONS TO ASK	HOW TO FIND THE ANSWER
ACCURACY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her? Is this person qualified to write this document? • What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/phone number. • Know the distinction between author and Webmaster.
AUTHORITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who published the document, and is the publisher different from the “Webmaster”? • What institution publishes this document? • Does the publisher list his or her qualifications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What credentials are listed for the author(s)? • Where is the document published? Check URL domains to see the name of the institution that published the document.
OBJECTIVITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What goals/objectives does this page meet? • How detailed is the information? • Does the publisher list his or her qualifications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if page is a mask for advertising, if so, information might be biased. • View any Web page as you would an infomercial on television. Ask yourself: Why was this written and for whom?
CURRENCY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was it produced? • When was it updated? • How up-to-date are the links (if any)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many dead links are on the page? • Are the links current or updated regularly? • Is the information on the page outdated? • For the purposes they serve, do these pages provide GOOD and Enough links to related information?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVERAGE • Are the links (if any) evaluated, and do they complement the theme? • Is the Web page all images or a balance of text and images? • Is the information presented cited correctly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If page required special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don't have the software? • Is it free, or is there a fee to obtain the information? • Is there an option for test only or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

Kapoun, Jim. “Questioning Web authority: How a librarian trains students to assess Web page credibility.” *Aft On Campus* 18.5 (2000) : 4.

Sites to help you evaluate information:

CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal)	http://www.csicop.org
QuackWatch	http://www.quackwatch.com
SpinSanity: Countering Rhetoric with Reason –evaluates news stories	http://www.spinsanity.org
Statistical Resources on the Web	http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html
The Virtual Chase: Groups that alert the public to internet fraud, fanaticism and bad information	http://www.virtualchase.com/quality/alert.html