

Evaluation Criteria



Blue Ridge Community College Houff Library

What you need to ask before using any web site:

1. Authority

Who is responsible for the web site on which the web page resides?

Are there any clues on the web page about the larger site? Look for a logo or icon that may be a link to the main web site.

What is the background of the author of the web site?

Is the author an expert in the field, a student or an organization? Has the author provided any information about herself and her qualifications? Use search engines to try and find additional information about the author's credentials.

What is the focus or purpose of the organization? Look for any links to a description of the organization. Is there a way to contact the organization, company or person responsible for the contents of the site? Is the name of the copyright holder given?

Is the web site an educational site (.edu), a commercial site (.com), a nonprofit organization (.org) or a government site (.gov)? Does the site list any recommendations or ratings from outside sources?

2. Purpose and Objectivity

Why has this information been posted and how objective is it?

Is the point of view of the person or organization obvious? If there is advertising on the page, is it clear what relationship exists between the author of the material and the advertiser? Is the purpose of the web site to inform or to broadcast an opinion? What audience is this web site trying to reach?

3. Content and coverage

How comprehensive is the web site?

Is there a large amount of information available or does the web site consist primarily of links to other web pages? Is the information presented on the page consistent with your knowledge of the topic?

How accurate is the content of the page?

Is the page free of grammatical and spelling errors? Are sources provided for facts so the information can be verified?

Are references or bibliographies posted on the page?

Is the source of the information stated or is a list of resources on the topic provided?

4. Currency

How current is the information?

Web pages should state the date when they were created or updated. Are the links working and current? Does it state that it is an archival page?

Questions? Local call for Harrisonburg/Rockingham County (540)234-9261,
Local call for Staunton 213-7002, Local call for Waynesboro 943-7002,
ext. 2309 or 2278 during the day, ext. 2247 evenings, ext. 2219 weekends.



This is from a New Yorker cartoon published July 5, 1993 created by Peter Steiner.