

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WEB SITES

Since there is so much information on the Internet, how do you know if the quality of the content is sound or the design is appropriate? In evaluating any site, look at some of these issues; content and the ideas the author is presenting, how the site is organized, speed of loading, name of the source and date created are listed, e-mail address is included, etc. With that in mind, use the following questions as a checklist.

ACCESS

- Does the Web site take too long to load?
- Has the URL changed with the new site (URL) listed?
- Do you have to pay a fee to access it, register to use it, or is it available to everyone?
- Are any rules for use stated up front? Are copyright issues listed?

SOURCE

- Who is the author or produce of the site?
- Does the author produce credential of any kind? Can they be verified?
- Is the site sponsored by a school, business, agency or individual?
- Is the site biased in any because of the source?
- Is an email address included for the author?
- Are there any links to sources that verify authority?
- Is a date included for the site and for any updates?

DESIGN

- Is the Home page inviting and friendly, thus you may want to find out more about the site?
- Are individual web pages clear and concise, or do you have to scroll forever?
- Is an index or site map included on the Home page and other pages in site?
- Are instructions included before links and interactive portions?
- Is the site layout clear, organized and intuitive?
- Can you explore your way around and easily find a particular page from any other page?
- Does the Web site do more than can be done with print?

- Is it easy to read the text with the font types, size, colors and contrast with backgrounds?
- Are graphics used consistently, appropriately and do not take forever to load?
- Are some of the graphics missing? Is multimedia or plug-in programs used appropriately?
- Do all the links work and are they up to date?
- Does the site work with all browsers?

CONTENT

- Does the title explain what the Web site is all about?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Are you able to understand the purpose of the Web site?
- Are headings clear and descriptive, or are they using jargon that makes sense only to the author?
- Is text well-written with acceptable grammar, punctuation, and spelling?
- Is the information accurate and current with links up to date?
- Are the content and the links clearly described and suitable to the expect audience?
- Can you use the content and information provided?
- Is the origin of the content documented? Is it accurate? Can you verify the information?
- Is it clear who is responsible for the site?
- Are biases and opinions clearly identified? Is there any conflict of interest? Has copyright been respected?
- Are there reviews of the site?