

## **Evaluating Web Resources**

Ask certain questions to determine whether or not a particular web page is suitable for a research paper.

### **Who is the Author? What is the Originating Source?**

The best sites are produced by those who have appropriate education, training, or experience to write on the topic. Check site documents or outside sources to find more information about the author or agency.

- Is there an actual author, and is the author clearly identified?
- Are the author's credentials clearly stated?
- Is the author affiliated with an organization?
- Does the site represent an organization, corporation, or government body?
- Is there a link to the organization's page or a way to contact the organization or author?

### **How Accurate or Reliable is this Information?**

- Can information be verified through footnotes, bibliographies, or other sources?
- Is there an editor or someone who verifies the information?
- Does the document include an explanation of research methods and data?
- Has the site been reviewed by others?

### **Consider the Author or Agency's Objectivity**

- Does the Web page show bias or particular perspective, or is information presented factually?
- Does the page contain advertising, and are ads separated from content?
- If you are looking at a corporate Web site, assume that the information on the corporation will be presented positively.

### **How Current is the Information Presented?**

- Is there a date stating when the document was created?
- Is it clear when the site was last updated or revised?
- Are links to other web pages still valid?

### **Why was this Web Content Created?**

- What is the primary purpose of the page? Does it sell a product or make a political point?
- Is the page a comprehensive resource or is information too narrowly focused?
- Is the emphasis technical, scholarly, or popular/opinion/entertainment in focus?

**And remember: If your teacher says "No Internet," avoid the general web altogether! Use only the Library's higher quality databases of journals, reference books, statistics eBooks and other resources.**