

# Evaluation of information sources

This document is a part of the [Information Quality WWW Virtual Library](#)

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This page contains pointers to criteria for evaluating information resources, particularly those on the Internet. It is intended to be particularly useful to librarians and others who are selecting sites to include in an information resource guide, or informing users as to the qualities they should use in evaluating Internet information. Feedback and suggestions of other sites for inclusion are welcomed by the site maintainer, [Alastair Smith](#).

- General selection criteria
  - [Bibliography on evaluating web information](#)/ Robert Sebek (originally begun by Nicole Auer), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
  - [The Children's Partnership's Guidelines for Content Creation and Evaluation: Version 1.0](#)/ (October 2003). "As part of our research on how to evaluate online content to determine if it meets the needs of underserved Internet users, The Children's Partnership has developed a comprehensive set of guidelines for creating and evaluating high-quality, accessible Web sites". [PDF document]
  - [Criteria for evaluation of Internet Information Resources](#)/ Alastair Smith
  - [Critical Evaluation of Resources](#)/ Margaret Phillips, UC Berkeley Library. Suggestions for evaluating a range of resources, including books, articles and websites. Covers suitability, authority, other indicators, reference sources, and provides links.
  - [Critical Evaluation Surveys](#)/ Kathleen Schrock - criteria for elementary, middle, and secondary school levels.
  - [An Educators' Guide to Credibility and Web Evaluation](#) / Toni Greer *et al.* Website for a course in internet resource evaluation. Considers "the following factors: 1. Reasons to evaluate; 2. Methods of evaluation; and 3. Teaching Web evaluation".
  - [Evaluate Web Pages](#) / Jan Alexander and Marsha Ann Tate at Widener University: provide materials to assist in the teaching of how to evaluate Web resources. It focuses on teaching how to develop critical thinking skills which can be applied to evaluating Web pages. Useful evaluation checklists for Advocacy, Business/Marketing, Information, News, and Personal web Pages. Alexander and Tait are the authors of *Web Wisdom: How to Evaluate and Create Information Quality on the Web*. [[link to original version](#)]
  - [Evaluating Credibility of Information on the Internet](#)/ Ronald B. Standler. Essay on adaption of traditional scientific criteria (peer review, credentials, writing style) to the Internet. [PDF document]
  - [Evaluating Foreign and International Legal Databases on the Internet](#) / Mirela Roznovschi. Suggests criteria for evaluating legal databases on the Internet.
  - [Evaluating information found on the Internet](#)/ Elizabeth Kirk, Johns Hopkins University

- [\*Evaluating Information: Some questions to help you judge Online Information/\*](#) Jacob Hespeler Library
- [\*Evaluating Internet Research Sources/\*](#) Robert Harris, Southern California College. Provides a set of evaluative tests and advice to readers on how to evaluate web information.
- [\*Evaluating Internet Resources: A checklist/\*](#) Infopeople. "Provides a starting point for evaluating the World Wide Web sites and other Internet information" - Authority/ Affiliation/ Currency/ Purpose/ Audience/ Compared to What?/ Conclusion.
- [\*Evaluating Internet Resources: An Annotated Guide to Selected Resources\*](#) Library of Congress list of links to "a number of such guides representing a variety of approaches, which together provide an overview of major issues to be considered when evaluating Internet resources".
- [\*Evaluating Internet Resources: Identity, Affiliation, and Cognitive Authority in a Networked World/\*](#) John W. Fritch and Robert L. Cromwell *JASIST* Volume 52, No.6, April, 2001 p. 499-507. Suggests specific steps to establish authority and bias in web pages. Abstract at <http://www.asis.org/Publications/JASIS/vol52n6.html>.
- [\*Evaluating Public Websites/\*](#) Vaughan C. Judd, Lucy I. Farrow, and Betty J. Tims. Form for evaluating quality of information. Written up in "Evaluating Public Website Information: A Process and an Instrument," *Reference Services Review*, vol. 34, no. 1.
- [\*Evaluating quality on the net/\*](#) Hope Tillman. The classic on web resource evaluation from a library perspective.
- [\*Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask/\*](#) Joe Barker, UC Berkeley Library. What can the URL tell you?/ Scan the perimeter of the page, looking for answers to these questions.../ Look for indicators of quality information/ What do others say?/ Does it all add up?/
- [\*Evaluating Web Sites: Criteria and Tools\*](#) Part of a Cornell University site on carrying out research. Looks at context, evaluation criteria web reviews and rankings and includes a Webliography.
- [\*Five criteria for evaluating Web pages\*](#) - A basic set of criteria (accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency, coverage) based on: Kapoun, Jim. "Teaching undergrads WEB evaluation: A guide for library instruction." *C&RL News* (July/August 1998): 522-523.
- [\*Getting It Right: Verifying Sources on the Net/\*](#) Sabrina I. Pacifici. This guide provides strategies and tools to assist you in the task of evaluating website content: analysing addresses, asking librarians, applying a checklist, checking domain registration.
- [\*The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: or, Why It's a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources/\*](#) Susan E. Beck: discusses criteria of Accuracy, Authority, Objectivity, Currency, Coverage, with links to examples.
- [\*The good, the bad and the useless: evaluating Internet resources/\*](#) Judith Edwards. *Ariadne* 16 (July 1998) <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue16/digital/>
- [\*Critically Analyzing Information Sources/\*](#) Cornell University Library (This deals with information sources in general, but contains useful criteria)

- [How To Evaluate A Web Site/](#) LaJean Humphries. Lists evaluation sites; gives advice on training in web evaluation; offers brief criteria: "Is the information current, accurate and complete?", "Is the information unbiased?", "Quality of writing".
- [How to Evaluate Medical Information Found on the Internet/](#) California Medical Association. "Suggestions for judging the reliability and quality of health and medical information found via internet resources, from staff of the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), plus additional commentary by CMA Library staff".
- [ICYouSee: T is for Thinking](#) John Henderson's five suggestions when examining Web pages.
- [Library Selection Criteria for WWW Resources/](#) Carolyn Caywood. A classic.
- [Measuring quality and impact of the world wide web/](#) Jeremy C Wyatt. *BMJ* No 7098 Volume 314 28 June 1997. Evaluating medical web sites, includes a useful table "Aspects of a web site which need to be considered when evaluating its reliability"
- [OASIS: Student Evaluation Methods for World Wide Web Resources/](#) ThanhTruc T. Nguyen. An evaluation tool for high school students to use in selecting appropriate resources from the World Wide Web as information resources
- [Publishers Wanted, No Experience Necessary: Information Quality on the Web /](#) Genie Tyburski. *Law Library Resource Exchange* 24 June 1997. Gives examples of five characteristics for identifying information quality on the web: timeliness, expediency, accuracy, objectivity, and authenticity.
- [RADCAB - Your Vehicle for Information Evaluation.](#) A mnemonic acronym (Relevancy, Appropriateness, Detail, Currency, Authority, Bias) for information evaluation created by Karen M. Christensson, an elementary school library media specialist.
- [The Six A's for Evaluating Web Content/](#) Mohamed Taher. Authority, Accuracy, Approach, Age Online, Audience level, Accessibility. PDF of a PowerPoint Presentation.
- Testing the Surf: Criteria for Evaluating Internet Information Resources/ Alastair G. Smith, *The Public-Access Computer Systems Review* 8, no. 3 (1997) <http://info.lib.uh.edu/pr/v8/n3/smit8n3.html>
- [Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources/](#) Esther Grassian, UCLA College Library
- [Thinking Critically about Web 2.0 and Beyond/](#) Esther Grassian, UCLA College Library
- [Thinking Critically: Evaluating Web Resources/](#) Kathleen Christy, Lamar Memorial Library
- [Web Credibility Project/](#) Persuasive Technology Lab, Stanford University. "Our goal is to understand what leads people to believe what they find on the Web. We hope this knowledge will enhance Web site design and promote future research on Web credibility". Includes [10 Guidelines for Web Credibility](#), explaining how can you boost your web site's credibility.

- [\*WWW CyberGuide Evaluation forms\*](#) for Content Evaluation and for Web Site Design/ Karen McLachlan. Framework for rating sites for instructional purposes.
- Selection criteria used for specific sources. Some of these are less useful than others, but included to show the range of criteria that are used for evaluation.
  - [\*Great Web Sites for Kids Selection Criteria\*](#)/ ALA's ALSC Children and Technology Committee, the selection guidelines for material in their [\*Great Websites for Kids\*](#) directory
  - [\*Librarians' Index to the Internet: LII Selection Criteria\*](#): Based on usefulness to the public library user's information needs: Content, authority, scope, design.
  - [\*Scout Report Selection Criteria\*](#): Detailed criteria used by this widely regarded current awareness service.