Evaluating Web Sites - A Quick Guide

No one pre-screens the quality of information found on the web, so you must evaluate what you find for yourself. You won't be able to perfectly evaluate every website, but get into the habit of thinking about these criteria.

Website or page you are evaluating:_____

Think: CAS: Credibility, Accuracy, Support

Factor to consider	Answer/information (or Yes)	I can't tell (or No)
Who is author? Human or Corporate/Organization?	❒ Human ❒ Organiz: Name _____ Type of org: ❒ Govt ❒ Company ❒ Non-profit ❒ Other _____	
Author's qualifications/ affiliation/position and contact information? Or what do I already know about this organization?	❒ Credentials (degrees, job position) _____ ❒ Email address or other contact info available ❒ I know about this org. from _____	
Info from other sources about this author? Do others think this author/org is credible?	❒ Can find info about author from reputable sites ❒ Searched reputable sources for info about person/organization	
Does it sell products/services? What is the purpose of the site overall?	❒ Sells ❒ Entertainment ❒ Education/public service ❒ Discussion forum ❒ News business ❒ Other _____	
Does it state a side of an issue? Or does it seem balanced?		
When was the information written or last updated?		
Is recent information important to your topic?		
Does the site have design failure - errors, bad grammar or spelling, poor navigation?	❒ a lot ❒ just 1 or 2 flaws ❒ nothing I could find wrong	
Where does the information come from? Does it provide references to reputable sources, or present proof of its claims?		
Is its basic data consistent with what you've found in reputable sources?		
What do others say of this content? Do others link to it favorably? Google: link:url		

Google Search Tips

- Use quotation marks around exact phrases

- Search Tools - Any Time - pick a custom range

- Google Canadian government custom search engine on library website
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- Use of OR between synonyms - you can use parentheses too for clarity but not needed

- Site: for specific domains, e.g., site:.pe.ca ; site:.ac.uk ; site:.edu ; site:.edu.au

- Filetype: for finding specific kinds of files e.g., filetype:pdf, filetype:pptx OR filetype:ppt

- Intitle: to force word in title of results, e.g., intitle:diabetes

- exclude terms with - (minus sign), e.g. intitle:dolphins -football -nfl

- Auto-stemming, e.g. canada/canadian

- Auto-synonyming - use Search Tools - All Results - Verbatim to override for all words

- Use + to override auto-stemming and auto-synonyming on specific words

- Word order matters - first words weighted higher than later words

- LibX plugin for "Reload Page via Proxy Server" feature - library.upei.ca/libx (Firefox and Chrome)

- **Don't ever pay for an article - check library holdings or ILL!**
  - Put article title in Onesearch with quotation marks and choose Title field