

## Evaluating Internet Sources

It is important when reviewing sources, to consider their value for your project across a range of categories including authority, accuracy, objectivity, timeliness, and coverage or relevance. Below are a number of questions to help guide you in making choices about the usefulness of a source for your research project.

### Authority:

- Is it clear who is sponsoring the page? (Government agency, university, national organization, etc.)
- Is the author's name clearly stated?
- Are the author's qualifications for writing on the subject evident?
- Can the legitimacy of the page's sponsor be verified? (i.e. address, phone number, e-mail, etc.)

### Accuracy:

- Are sources clearly listed for factual information so they can be verified?
- Are there many grammatical, spelling, or other errors?
- Who has the responsibility for the accuracy of the content of the material?

### Objectivity:

- What is the purpose of the page? To persuade, explain, inform?
- Can you detect bias?
- If there are ads, are they clearly differentiated from the content of the text?

### Timeliness:

- Are there dates on the page to indicate: When the page was written? When it was placed on the web? When it was last revised?
- Any indications that the site is kept current?
- Is it clear when the data of graphs, charts, etc. were gathered?

### Coverage and Relevance:

- Is it the entire document or a summary/abstract?
- How in-depth is the information?
- What time period is covered?

From: Herrling, Patricia. **Guide at Steenbock Library, University of Wisconsin at Madison.** Copyright Widener University, 1996.