Harold Washington College Library

Criteria for Evaluating Information on the Web

Purpose

- ❑ Is the purpose of the site stated? To inform? Persuade? Advocate? Etc.
- ❑ Is it a scholarly site or a popular site?
- ❑ Does the site contain advertising?
- ❑ What type of domain does it have? (.com; .org ; .net; .edu; .gov; other) What might this tell you about the Web site?

Intended Audience

- ❑ Who is the site intended for?
- ❑ What type of audience do you think the author is trying to reach?

Authority / Credibility

- ❑ Can the author or creators of the site be identified? Who is responsible for the content?
- ❑ Are any qualifications or credentials of the author given?
- ❑ Is contact information for the author provided?
- ❑ Is the sponsor agency's mission or background given?

Currency / Timeliness

- ❑ When was the site created?
- ❑ Have there been any updates or revisions?
- ❑ Does the site include any dead links?

Accuracy / Reliability

- ❑ Does the information on the site appear to be well researched?
- ❑ Can information be verified elsewhere?
- ❑ Are references to sources of information provided?
- ❑ Are sources for factual or statistical information documented?

- ❑ Are there links to other sites? Do these sites appear to be reliable sources of information?
- ❑ Are there misspellings, grammatical errors, or other inaccuracies?
- ❑ How does the information compare to print information on the topic?

Objectivity / Bias

- ❑ Are the goals of the author clearly stated?
- ❑ Does the site present many opinions or only one?
- ❑ Is there any identifiable bias in the information provided?
- ❑ Is the site sponsored by a company or organization? If so, what is the purpose of the company / organization?
- ❑ Is the site intended to sell something?
- ❑ Does the site reflect the agenda of a specific group?
- ❑ Are there advertisements on the site? If so, are they clearly set apart from the informational content?

Structure / Navigation

- ❑ Is the organization of the site clear and logical?
- ❑ Is it easy to navigate between parts of the site?
- ❑ Is there a link to the main (home) page of the site on secondary pages?
- ❑ Is there a table of contents or index for the site?
- ❑ Is the site searchable?
- ❑ Do graphics on the site add or detract from the page?

Conclusion

- ❑ Based on the information gathered in this checklist, would this site be a good source of information for your research assignment?