

## **Evaluating Resources: A Critical Review Framework**

Not all information is equally valuable to complete specific research projects. Information – regardless of the format or delivery mechanism – must be carefully evaluated to determine its usefulness, authoritativeness, objectiveness and relevancy in completing a research project or filling an information need.

The World Wide Web is often used as a source to gather information. Therefore, it is crucial to develop evaluative and critical skills when utilizing web sites.

In fact, the same critical criteria and rigorous review process should be applied to all information resources – not just web-based – to determine the quality and authoritativeness of content.

This evaluation process will help to keep your work focused, save you time, and eventually become second nature. Also, consider the purpose of the information needed as you search through sources – are you seeking entertainment, opinion, or factual information from credible sources?

### **A Critical Framework for Evaluating Resources**

Consider the following criteria and questions when gathering information:

#### **1. Source and Authority**

Who wrote, created or published the information?

Can you clearly identify the credentials of the author or publisher?

Is the author or publisher of the web page affiliated with an established institution or organization?

Is contact information for the author or producer provided?

Can you identify a probable bias of the author or organization?

Are sources acknowledged, such as data tables, quotes or reprinted articles?

Can the information be verified through bibliographies or footnotes?

#### **2. Scope, Content, and Objectivity**

What is the scope or coverage of the information presented?

How well does the information address your topic?

Is the resource comprehensive, brief, or unique?

What is the purpose of the source or Website - research, marketing, informational, entertainment or advocacy for a specific cause?

Is the material presented as original information, or is it a secondary source?

### **3. Timeliness and Currency**

When was the information published or the Web page created?

How current or up-to-date is the information?

Is the Web page updated or revised on a regular basis?

Is the information timely and valid for your specific topic?

Does the resource demonstrate currency and stability by providing a contact person, e-mail address, and regular site maintenance?

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