



How to Evaluate a Source

All information, whatever its format or means of distribution, needs to be evaluated for authority, accuracy, content, and usefulness. The following questions are designed to help you think through the evaluation process for internet resources and electronic resources.

Source of Information: _____

Authority

- Who is the author?

- What biographical information available?

- What are the author's qualifications for writing on this subject? In what areas are they a subject matter expert?

- Is the author connected with an organization that has an established reputation or that might have a biased agenda?

- Is contact information for the author or producer readily identifiable and if so, where?

- From the domain name, can you tell who the publisher or page originator is? (Try referencing this website resource): <http://www.netsoicom/cgi-bin/whois/whois>

Accuracy

- Does the author cite credible sources for his or her facts (footnotes)?

- Is a bibliography or other documentation included?
- How does the information compare with other sources of information written about this subject? Is the information thorough and useful? (Gender neutral writing is not a consideration here).

- Are the Ideas clearly presented? Is the argument

presented consistent?

Purpose & Objectivity

- What is the author's purpose? To inform, e.g. provide new information, current events, etc?; To explain, e.g. describe a process, teach, etc?; To persuade, e.g. change your mind, convince you of a position or theory?

- Who is the intended audience?

- What is the worldview or bias that is represented?

- Does the author use inflammatory language? _____

Currency & Organization

- Does the source/site include a publication date and/or "last updated" date? _____
- Are there any dead links on the page? _____
- Is the grammar, punctuation and spelling correct?
- Is the layout clear and easy to use? Are the graphics helpful or distracting?

- Is an internal search of the site available? Is there a site map, index, or other organizational guide? _____

Reviews

- Has the source / site won any awards? Are there any endorsements? _____
- Who links to the site? (In www.google.com type "link:webaddress" and hit search)

- Has the source/site been reviewed (www.lii.org or in a review source e.g., Library Journal, Book Review Digest etc., or in a research database such as Ebsco)?

Summary Comment:

This source / site is useful to my research because:
