

Library Handout
Evaluation of Web Sources

Evaluating web pages skillfully requires you to consider the following:

SOURCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can one clearly and quickly identify the author or creator of the web page? • Is the author of the web page an organization, academic institution, association or an individual?
CREDENTIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you determine what the author's credentials are? Look to see if the author has written any other books or published some journal articles? • If the web page is located on the specific organization's website, what do you know about the organization? You can search on the web to see if anyone has written about the specific organization or association. • Is there contact information on the web page (e.g. e-mail address, phone number, etc.)?
TYPE OF INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the information scholarly, popular, governmental or from a private business? • Are the web pages intended to be entertaining, educational, business related, or personal opinions? • Who is the intended audience – general public, other academics, researchers, professionals or students? Does the information support your thesis and research?
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author making an argument for personal gain, offering an opinion, giving a factual report, presenting a well researched scholarly opinion, or relaying a personal opinion? • Can you identify objective writing or a subjective bias (expressing one's own point of view)?
SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you determine where the author gathered the information (i.e. are there footnotes, etc)? • Is the material from original research, experiments, observation, interviews, books, and documents? • Are secondary references provided (bibliography or reference list)?
TIMELINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the material on this web page published? Was it published earlier (or later) in the print format? Does your research demand only current information or can you use information that is older? • Can you determine if the web page is being updated frequently (or recently)?
STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing style clear and understandable? If not why not? Does the author legitimately need to use complex language because of the subject matter, or for some other reasons? • Are helpful graphs, charts, tables or pictures provided in the text?