Evaluating Internet Resources: A checklist

Unlike most print resources such as magazines, journals, and books that go through a filtering process (e.g. editing, peer review, library selection), information on the Internet is mostly unfiltered. So using and citing information found over the Internet is a little like swimming without a lifeguard. The following guide provides a starting point for evaluating the World Wide Web sites and other Internet information.

Authority

- Who is the author of the piece?
- Is the author the original creator of the information?
- Does the author list his or her occupation, years of experience, position, education, or other credentials?

Affiliation

- What institution (company, organization, government, university, etc.) or Internet provider supports this information?
- If it is a commercial Internet provider, does the author appear to have any connection with a larger institution?
- Does the institution appear to exercise quality control over the information appearing under its name?
- Does the author's affiliation with this particular institution appear to bias the information?

Currency

- When was the information created or last updated?

Purpose

- What appears to be the purpose for this information?
- Inform
- Explain
- Persuade

Audience

- Who is the intended audience?

Compared to what?

- What does this work/site offer compared to other works, including non-internet works?

Conclusion

Given all the information you determined from above, is this Internet site appropriate to add to your bookmark?