Five criteria for evaluating Web pages

Evaluation of Web documents	How to interpret the basics
1. Accuracy of Web Documents • Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her? • What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced? • Is this person qualified to write this document?	**Accuracy** • Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/phone number. • Know the distinction between author and Webmaster.
2. Authority of Web Documents • Who published the document and is it separate from the "Webmaster?" • Check the domain of the document, what institution publishes this document? • Does the publisher list his or her qualifications?	**Authority** • What credentials are listed for the authors)? • Where is the document published? Check URL domain.
3. Objectivity of Web Documents • What goals/objectives does this page meet? • How detailed is the information? • What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?	**Objectivity** • Determine if page is a mask for advertising; if so information might be biased. • View any Web page as you would an infommercial on television. Ask yourself why was this written and for whom?
4. Currency of Web Documents • When was it produced? • When was it updated' • How up-to-date are the links (if any)?	**Currency** • How many dead links are on the page? • Are the links current or updated regularly? • Is the information on the page outdated?
5. Coverage of the Web Documents • Are the links (if any) evaluated and do they complement the documents' theme? • Is it all images or a balance of text and images? • Is the information presented cited correctly?	**Coverage** • If page requires special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don't have the software? • Is it free or is there a fee, to obtain the information? • Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

Putting it all together

• Accuracy. If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her and . . .
• Authority. If your page lists the author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, .gov, .org, or .net), and, . .
• Objectivity. If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information, and . . .
• Currency. If your page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date, and . . .
• Coverage. If you can view the information properly--not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement, then . . .

You may have a Web page that could be of value to your research!

Works Cited

Kapoun, Jim. "Teaching undergrads WEB evaluation: A guide for library instruction." C&RL News
(July/August 1998): 522-523. <u>Cornell University Library.</u> 27 Feb. 2009.
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/webcrit.html>.