

## Handout #3

### Five Common Library Checklists for Evaluating Website Information

Many California public libraries' websites link to or replicate one or more of the following checklists on evaluating websites. Academic libraries tend to provide more elaborate lists and approaches to evaluation. The checklists themselves are often one-word reminders.

<b>Source or sources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alexander, Jan. &amp; Tate, Marsha. "Teaching Critical Evaluation skills for World Wide Web Resources," <i>Computers In Libraries</i>. Nov/Dec 1996 and many other places.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kapoun, Jim. "Teaching Undergrads WEB Evaluation: A Guide for Library Instruction," <i>C&amp;RL News</i>. July/August 1998, pp. 522.523.</li> </ul>
<b>CHECKLIST</b>	<b>WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER</b>	
<b>Authority</b>	Who sponsors the creation and maintenance of the page? Purpose of sponsoring organization? Address or contact information provided for sponsoring organization? Who developed the information? What are his/her credentials on this topic? Contact information for this author?	Who published the page? Check the domain: what institution publishes this document? Does the publisher list his or her qualifications?
<b>Accuracy</b>	Sources for factual information provided? Any errors you can detect? Who is responsible for the accuracy of the information? In statistical data is in graphs or charts, are they labeled clearly? Any errors?	Who wrote the page, can you contact him? What is the purpose of the document, why produced? Is this person qualified to write this document?
<b>Objectivity</b>	Provided as a public service? Free of advertising? If advertising, is it identified and separate? Other signs of bias?	What goals/objectives does this page meet? How detailed is the information? What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?
<b>Currency</b>	Dates present for when written, when first placed online, when last revised or edited? Updated frequently enough to ensure currency of the data? If taken from a print source, is the edition given? Links up to date?	When was it produced? When was it updated? How up-to-date are the links (if any)?
<b>Coverage</b>	Page not under construction? If from larger work, is the relationship clear? If from an old source, has it been updated? Any evidence of omissions? Does it cover the subject adequately?	Are the links evaluated and do they complement the document's theme? Is it all images or a balance of text and images? Is the information cited?

<b>Source or sources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>San Francisco Public Library, "Evaluating Web Sites: A how-to guide for researchers" <a href="http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/sfplonline/kids/wevevaluation.htm">http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/sfplonline/kids/wevevaluation.htm</a></li> <li>Inspired by the work of Kathy Schrock. <a href="http://discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/eval.html">discoveryschool.com/schrockguide/eval.html</a></li> </ul>	
<b>CHECKLIST</b>	<b>WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER</b>	
<b>Who</b>	Look at the author. Famous, respected? Or unknown? Look at the URL. Use the domain to help determine if the site is reliable.	
<b>When</b>	Look at the date. Are links working? If not, you can guess the author is no longer maintaining this website.	
<b>What</b>	What is the goal of this website? What is the viewpoint? (Give facts, sell, inform, persuade, laughter) Intended to help people do research or talk them into buying something?	
<b>Where</b>	Where does the information come from? Documented, or from an organization famous for its research. Beware if sources not provided.	
<b>Why</b>	Why is this information useful to you? Does it answer your questions? Does it help you write your report? The best information in the world is not useful if it does not answer the questions YOU have.	

## OVER

Source or sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infopeople Website: "Evaluating Internet Resources: A Checklist" <a href="http://www.infopeople.org/resources/bkmk/select.html">www.infopeople.org/resources/bkmk/select.html</a></li> <li>• Adapted from: Wilkinson, G.L., Bennett, L., &amp; Oliver, K. "Consolidated Listing of Evaluation Criteria and Quality Indicators" <i>Educational Technology</i>. March/April, 1997. Initially at: <a href="http://t2.coe.uga.edu/Faculty/gwilkinson/criteria.html">t2.coe.uga.edu/Faculty/gwilkinson/criteria.html</a> – a link that no longer works.</li> </ul>
<b>CHECKLIST</b>	<b>WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER</b>
Authority	Who is the author of the piece? Is the author the 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 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?

Source or sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barker, Joe. "Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply &amp; Questions to Ask," . Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2005. <a href="http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html">www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html</a></li> </ul>
<b>CHECKLIST</b>	<b>WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER</b>
What can the URL tell you?	Is it somebody's personal page? What type of domain does it come from? Is it published by an entity that makes sense?
Scan the perimeter of the page	Who wrote the page: look for links that say "About us," "Philosophy," "Background," "Biography," "Who am I." If you cannot find these, truncate back the URL one / at a time and see if you can find out who is behind the page. Is the page current enough? Look for the "last updated" date on all the pages of the site. What are the author's credentials on this subject?
Look for indicators of quality	Look for links to other resources. Is the information documented. Do the links reflect a bias? Look at the publisher (first part of URL usually): is it the true publisher or possibly a fake?
What do others say?	Find out what pages link to this page. Look the page or site up in a reliable subject directory for opinions. Search the author's name in Google and see what you find.
Does it all add up?	Step back and pay attention to your gut reaction to all you've found. What are the intentions of the authors? Why was the page created? (Inform, explain, give data, persuade, entice, sell, share, disclose) Be sensitive to the possibility that you are the victim of a spoof, irony, joke, satire, or parody. Is this source as good as what I could find if I used the library and its resources?