

# Evaluation of Web Sites

It is important when researching on the Internet to be aware that not all the information you find may be as useful as you might think at first. By making a few simple checks you can ensure that the information you are using is reliable.

A useful web site should meet the following criteria:

- **Objectivity**

- is there a statement of the aims of the organisation clearly available on the page
- is the website aiming to influence you in some way
- is the information presented without advertising. If advertising is present is it clear that it is different to the information provided

- **Accuracy**

- is the site free from errors
- can you verify the information using other sources such as encyclopedias or other websites
- if statistics are quoted are the sources provided so that they can be checked

- **Authority**

- is there an obvious author or organisation who is responsible for the site
- are they qualified in the particular field.
- check for contact details so you can verify the information
- have a look at the URL or web address

A site with .com (commercial) in the address may be trying to sell you something. Research information is more likely to be reliable if it comes from an .edu (educational) or .gov (government) site. Other sites may have .asn (association), .org (organisation), .net (network) as part of their address.

- **Timeliness**

- when was the site last updated

The date of the last revision is usually placed at the bottom of the home page. If it is not there, look for other clues - check the dates of any events listed or documents included.

- are links from the page still valid

- **Relevancy**

- Does the page provide useful content and sufficient information to help with your research