

5 Criteria for Evaluating Web Sites (Applicable to Any Media):

To determine whether a site's contents (or **any** media's contents – books, newspapers, television, etc.) can be trusted, it is best that that you carefully **evaluate** the site. See below for questions to ask when determining whether a site (or other media) contains sound information.

1. **Audience** – To whom is the site directed – children, adults, students; a certain ethnicity, gender or political affiliation? Is it understandable by the layman, or is it highly technical requiring specialized knowledge?
2. **Authority** – Is the author of the site listed? Can you determine his/her expertise? Is contact information given – phone number, address, e-mail? With what organization is he/she associated?
3. **Bias** - Does the language, tone, or treatment of its subject give the site a particular slant or bias? Is the site objective? Is it designed to sway opinion? Organizational affiliation can often indicate bias.
4. **Currency** – Is the site up-to-date with working links? Are dates given for when it was created and last updated? Is the topic current?
5. **Scope** – Is the site an in-depth study of the topic going several pages deep, or is it a superficial, single-page look at the subject? Are statistics and sources referenced properly cited? Does the site offer unique information not found anywhere else, e.g., print sources?

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