

When finding information on the World Wide Web, it is important to **evaluate** a Web site in order to determine whether it is a credible, reliable source to use for research purposes. You can evaluate the quality of a Web site by asking yourself the following questions:

1. Purpose & Content

- What type of site is this? (i.e., commercial **(.com)**, organizational **(.org)**, educational **(.edu)**, government **(.gov)**, military **(.mil)**, other?)
- What is the *purpose* of this site? (i.e., to inform, to entertain, to advertise, other?)
- What *kind* of information is the site providing? Is the information presented *objective* or *biased*?

2. Author

- Who created this page? Does the site even indicate who the author is? What are the author's *qualifications* or *area(s) of expertise*?
- Is there a link to a "**Mission Statement**" or an "**About Our Organization**" page? The information provided on such pages can indicate to you what side of an issue a particular organization is on, or help you to understand a company's values and principles, for example.
- Is there **contact information** available from the site? Sometimes contacting someone directly, whether by phone or by email, is the best way to get specific information you may need, or to get recommendations for other resources you might consult to get further information.

3. Currency

- When was the site last *updated* or *revised*? (Most important for topics that are subject to change frequently.) Is the site *well-maintained*, or are there many broken links, errors, etc.? A quality site will be well-maintained and updated as necessary.

4. Design/Organization

- Is the site well-organized and easy to use? Can you find the information you need? Is the site slow to load or difficult to read? Sites that are not well-designed or organized may not be worth your time spent using them for research purposes, and, furthermore, may be unreliable resources.

Libraries often link to quality Web sites from their home pages. For example, the Loyola/Notre Dame Library links to Web sites on each subject page (use the scrolling **Resources by Subject** menu on the **library's home page** to choose a topic). Another good source of quality Web sites is **Librarians' Index to the Internet**. These Web sites generally have already been evaluated by a librarian and selected as being good sources for particular subject areas or research needs. So, in a sense, the evaluative work has already been done for you. You can freely use these Web sites knowing that they are reliable sources. Still, you should evaluate even these sites to determine whether they are appropriate for your specific purpose.