

EVALUATING WEB SITES

BRITISH COLUMBIA
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Quiz

1. Is everything you read on the Internet true?
2. Is the information you find on the web reliable?
3. Are the results of your Google search good enough for a class assignment now that you're at BCIT?

A search engine is an easy place to start looking for information on your research topic.

Evaluating the results of your search can be hard.

But it's important.

Especially if you plan to use the information from those sites for a class assignment.

To evaluate whether a website is good enough for your research consider the following criteria:

- ⇒ Authority: the author of the web site is qualified to provide information on the subject.
- ⇒ Coverage: the information is in-depth and at the appropriate level.
- ⇒ Accuracy: the information is correct and precise.
- ⇒ Currency: the web site is up-to-date.
- ⇒ Objectivity: the web site is neutral and fair. If it is representing a point of view it is up front about its bias.

Use the list of questions on the back to determine if a website is a credible and appropriate source of information for your project.

Answers:
1. No 2. Sometimes 3. Maybe

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Did you know?

Domain names can indicate the source of a web site:

“edu” = academic institution

“gov” or “ca” = government agency

“org” = non-profit organization

“com” = commercial ventures

CONTACT INFO

T 604.432.8371

E ibrarian@bcit.ca

bcit.ca/library

Exercise

Find one website you would consider using for an assignment.
 Write down the name of the website and the url.
 Go through the questions below and determine whether it is credible and appropriate for your research.
 (Note: All the questions won't apply to every site.)

Name of website: _____

URL: _____

	Yes	No	Not Applicable / Not sure
AUTHORITY			
Is the author clearly stated? (It could be a company, organization, person or persons)			
Are the author's qualifications clearly stated?			
Is the author qualified to write on the subject?			
Is the author's contact information clearly provided?			
Does the author cite where their information comes from? (i.e. reference list)			
COVERAGE			
Is the information detailed enough for your purposes?			
Does the site provide unique information rather than just linking to other sites?			
Are there links to further relevant information?			
Is the site appropriate for the intended audience?			
Does the site contain illustrations, video or audio that add value?			
Is the site well designed and organized?			
ACCURACY			
Can the information be verified by other sources?			
Is the site free from grammatical and spelling errors?			
Based on your knowledge of the subject does the information seem credible?			
If there are calculations are they correct?			
CURRENCY			
Was the site recently updated?			
Are the links up-to-date and working?			
OBJECTIVITY			
Does the author express opinions rather than facts?			
Is the information balanced and unbiased?			
Is the site selling something?			
Is there lots of advertising on the page?			

Would you use the website listed above for your project ? Yes No

Why or why not?

Adapted from: Kapoun, Jim. "Teaching undergrads WEB evaluation: A guide for library instruction." C&RL News (July/August 1998): 522-523.