When searching for information using the World Wide Web, it is important to be aware of the quality of the information being presented to you. Keep in mind that anyone can host a web site. To be sure that the information you are looking at is credible and of value keep the following criteria in mind:

1. **AUTHORITY/SOURCE**
   Is it clear who is responsible for the contents of the page? Try to find out who are the authors of the Web page. Is it an organization, society, governmental site? Is it sponsored by an educational institution or is it someone’s personal site? Or, is it a commercial site where someone is selling something? Do the authors of the site have any qualifications to go with the information they are presenting? Does the site present any other way of contacting the site authors -- postal address, phone numbers?

2. **ACCURACY**
   Are the sources for any factual information listed so that you can verify them in another source? How well put together is the site -- does it have spelling errors, typos, etc.? Are any charts, diagrams, statistical information clearly labeled as to where the data source came from?

3. **OBJECTIVITY/CONTENT**
   Is this information being provided as part of a public service? How much, if any, advertising is there on the page? Is the advertising content clearly separate from the informational content? Does the author of the page state any bias for producing the page, such as an advocacy for a particular point of view or program?

4. **CURRENCY/TIMELINESS**
   When was the last time the page itself was updated? Are there any indications on how often the informational content is updated?

5. **STRUCTURE/ACCESS**
   How well designed or user-friendly is the site? If it contains images, are they useful, load quickly or merely take up space. Can it be viewed as text-only? Does it contain a “search the site” function?

**DOMAINS**

- .org = non-profit organization
- .edu = us educational institution
- .info=commercial
- .tv = television
- .gov = US government
- .mil = US military
- .biz=business
- .museum = museums
- .com = commercial site
- .net = network resources
- .name=personal sites

For more information on how to evaluate web sites see:

- Evaluating Web Resources (tutorial)


- The Good, the Bad, the Ugly; or, Why It’s a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources [http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html](http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html)