

# Evaluate Web Sites

Knowing how to evaluate Web sites will help you to understand how reliable a Web site is. Some Web sites are biased toward one point of view. Others may contain inaccurate information. Finally, many Web sites are out of date.

**1 Identify the author or sponsor of the Web site, assess the reliability of the author, and identify any bias to find out whether the Web site is objective.**

Finding the author or sponsor of a Web site is not always easy. Check the bottom of the home page or look for a link that says “About Us.” Then, try to learn about the author or sponsor. What is the goal of the Web site? Do you see emotional language or other language that suggests that the Web site is biased? Avoid Web sites with a clear bias, as they may not present both sides of a topic.

**2 Identify when the Web site was last updated and determine whether the information is current.**

The copyright date or date that the Web site was created or updated can often be found at the bottom of the home page. For online encyclopedias, blogs, and other sites that frequently add new content, be sure to check the date of each entry. Some content may be much more recent than the date when the site was created. Think about your topic and then decide if the site is current. Are you researching something for a history class? In that case, even if the Web site is a number of years old, it may be a good source. On the other hand, if you are looking for information about an on-going current event, information from a month ago might already be out of date.

**3 Compare the content of the Web site to other Web sites and sources on the same topic.**

Once you have decided that a Web site seems reliable and up-to-date, be sure to check the site against other sources. Even the best sites may have mistakes. Read other reliable Web sites or do some more research at the library. Having at least two reliable sources for each piece of information will help to make sure that you have accurate information.