WEB SITE EVALUATION

Use the 5 W’s method: Who, What, When, Where, Why?*

Who? Authority
- Who wrote the pages and are they an expert? Enter the author’s name into a search engine to conduct a quick background check. See who owns the domain name: http://www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp
- Can you contact the company or author through a postal address or phone number?
- Can you confirm that the company or author is a credible, authoritative source of information?

What? Objectivity/Goals of the Authors
- What is the purpose of the site? To sell? To inform? To persuade?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Does the site rely on loaded language or broad, unsubstantiated statements?
- Is emotion used as a means of persuasion?
- Does the site offer more than one viewpoint?
- Are there links to further in-depth resources?

When? Currency
- When was the site created/updated/revised?
- Do the links work?
- Is there a current copyright statement?

Where? Accuracy/Reliability
- Where does the information come from?
- What is the top-level domain of the URL?
  The type of organization behind a Web site can give some clues to its credibility. These are general, but not necessarily fool-proof, hints:
  - .gov federal departments
  - .us country code for the U.S.
  - .edu colleges/universities
  - .org non-profit agencies
  - .com commercial organizations

Why? Coverage/Value of the Content
- Why is this information useful for my purpose?
- Is the Internet the best resource for this topic?
- Why is this page better than another?

*Adapted from Kathy Schrock’s “5 W’s of Website Evaluation (1998),” and Media Awareness Network’s, “5 W’s of Cyberspace (2008).” Revised 02.02.10, Emmanuel d’Alzon Library.