

## Website Evaluation

The Web is uncontrolled and unfiltered, so it is important to evaluate any content you may wish to use in an assignment. *Be skeptical!* The few tips below will help to get you started:

**Purpose:** What is the purpose of the site? Is it commercial, educational, a personal page, or entertainment? Does it support a particular group? Is it trying to sell you something? Does the site contain the information itself, or does it link to other sites for this? Look at the URL to determine the information source –

For example:      **.gov** – government agency  
                          **.edu** – an educational institution  
                          **.org** – an organisation  
                          **.com** – a commercial site  
                          ~ – a tilde indicates a personal site

**Identification:** Does the page have a title? Does the title reflect clearly what the page is about?

**Authority:** Can you identify an author/publisher – individual or corporate? If so, is there information about the author: qualifications, previous publications, links to organisations, contact details? If an organisation, are its values/goals made clear? Does the author acknowledge the sources of the information provided?

**Audience:** Who is the intended audience? What is the level of the information provided – basic, more in-depth or scholarly? Does the text contain jargon or colloquialisms, or is it more academic?

**Currency:** Can you tell when the page was last updated? A web page date can mean: the date the document was first written, the date the document was placed on the web, or the date the document was last revised. Are links active?

**Accuracy:** Does the information appear correct and reliable – does it tie in with other information you have on the topic? Are conclusions drawn based soundly on the evidence presented? Are there any spelling mistakes?

**Scope:** Are all aspects of the subject covered? What time period is covered in the document?

**Objectivity:** Does the page offer a balanced view? Is there any evidence of bias – e.g. is the language used inflammatory or emotive? Is there advertising on the page, or corporate sponsorship?

**Clarity:** Is the information legible, well-organised and clearly presented? Are points in the text appropriately illustrated with graphs, images, etc?

**Links:** Are there links to other sites? Are the connections appropriate? Do these sites appear reputable?

**Navigation:** Can you navigate easily around the site? Is there a “text only” option? Does the site load quickly? Is there a search function? Can you return to the home page easily?