

By Mary Northrup

Can the Internet be used for research? Absolutely—if you look at each Web site you plan to use with a critical eye.

Consider the criteria:



Author of the Site

Whose idea was it?

- ▶ If one person, what are that person's credentials?
- ▶ If an organization, check the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in your library
- ▶ Is an address or e-mail address given?



Place of Origin

What country or state does it come from?

- ▶ The United States
- ▶ Other countries (Check the country code in the URL: .de for Germany, .au for Australia, .sg for Singapore, etc.)



URL

What type of site is it?

- ▶ .com—a commercial site
- ▶ .org—a group or organization
- ▶ .edu—an academic institution
- ▶ .gov—a government site
- ▶ .mil—a military site
- ▶ .net—a network



Purpose

How objective will it be?

- ▶ To inform you
- ▶ To convince you of a point of view
- ▶ To sell you a product or service
- ▶ To amuse or entertain you



Content

Is it what you need to know and enough of what you need?

- ▶ Source of the information (books, articles, research, observation, opinion)
- ▶ Comparison with other sources: accurate? current?



Currency

Is it being updated to reflect current news and trends?

- ▶ Date of creation
- ▶ Last update
- ▶ Up-to-date links



Intended Audience

What age or reading level is it aimed at?



Organization

Is the overall look pleasing and logical?



Ease of Navigation

Correct spelling and grammar

- ▶ Use of graphics
- ▶ Placement of ads
- ▶ Design

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Mary Northrup is a Reference Librarian at Maple Woods Community College in Kansas City, Missouri.