

## Website Evaluation: The Checklist Model<sup>1</sup>

### Five criteria for evaluating Web pages

Evaluation of Web documents	How to interpret the basics
<p><b>1. Accuracy of Web Documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her?</li> <li>• What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced?</li> <li>• Is this person qualified to write this document?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/phone number.</li> <li>• Know the distinction between author and Webmaster.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Authority of Web Documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who published the document and is it separate from the "Webmaster?"</li> <li>• Check the domain of the document, what institution publishes this document?</li> <li>• Does the publisher list his or her qualifications?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Authority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What credentials are listed for the author(s)?</li> <li>• Where is the document published? Check URL domain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Objectivity of Web Documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What goals/objectives does this page meet?</li> <li>• How detailed is the information?</li> <li>• What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Objectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine if page is a mask for advertising; if so information might be biased.</li> <li>• View any Web page as you would an infommercial on television. Ask yourself why was this written and for whom?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Currency of Web Documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When was it produced?</li> <li>• When was it updated?</li> <li>• How up-to-date are the links (if any)?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Currency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many dead links are on the page?</li> <li>• Are the links current or updated regularly?</li> <li>• Is the information on the page outdated?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Jim Kalhoun, "Teaching Undergrads Website Evaluation," *College and Reseach Libraries News* 59, 7 (1998): 522-3.

## 5. Coverage of the Web Documents

- Are the links (if any) evaluated and do they complement the documents theme?
- Is it all images or a balance of text and images?
- Is the information presented cited correctly?

## Coverage

- If page requires special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don't have the software?
- Is it free, or is there a fee, to obtain the information?
- Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

## Putting it all together

- **Accuracy.** If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her, and . . .
- **Authority.** If your page lists the author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, .gov, .org, or .net), and . . .
- **Objectivity.** If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information, and . . .
- **Currency.** If your page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date, and . . .
- **Coverage.** If you can view the information properly- not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement, then . . .

**You may have a high quality Web page that could be of value to your research!**