



Checklist for Evaluating Information from the World Wide Web



You should always evaluate information found on the Internet. START is an acronym that will help you remember the five categories of criteria for evaluating information sources found online.

The letters in the acronym stand for:

Scope

Treatment

Authority

Relevance

Timeliness

START Checklist

Scope

- Are all aspects of the topic covered?
- Is the coverage in depth?
- Does the information add new or unique information about your topic?
- Are there visual aids that enhance the text?

Treatment

- Is the information presented as a fact or opinion?
- Is evidence provided?
- Are conclusions logical? Are there links to more information or references?
- Is the information free from bias?
- Is the information consistent with information from other sources?
- Is the site free of grammatical or spelling errors?

Authority

- Are the author's qualifications presented? Is the page signed?
- Is there any information about the author available?
- Does the author have an educational background related to the topic?
- Does the author have other expertise related to the topic?
- Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or other reputable organization? Is .edu for "education" part of the URL?
Is .gov for "government" part of the URL?
- Is the information from a website or an organization that is reliable?
- Do you know anything about the reputation of the organization? Is there any information on the page about the organization?

Relevance

- Does the information address your topic?
- Does the information provide evidence for your point of view?
- Does the information verify other information you are using from other sources?

Timeliness

- Is there a date provided for the web page and the information on it?
- Is the information sufficiently current for your purpose?
- Regardless of the date, is the information still useful?

NOTE: Not every box must be checked for a website to have value. However, if you cannot check at least the majority in each section, you should NOT use the website as a source.