Internet Evaluation

Web searching is very common in research today because the Internet:

• contains a vast amount of information and material

• is easy to use

• is convenient, accessible anytime, anywhere
Some very valuable information is available on the Internet.

However, you have the responsibility for evaluating each site you use.
Consider the intended audience of the page, based on its content, tone, and style. Does this match with your needs? Also consider these four **basic elements** when evaluating an Internet resource:

- Purpose
- Source
- Content
- Currency
Consider the purpose of the website:

• Some websites are designed to persuade you.

• Other sites are used strictly to provide information or educate you.

• Some websites are created as entertainment or jokes, often in a subtle, satirical way so that the humor is not always obvious.

• Many websites are selling products.
Consider the source:

- Web search engines often amass vast results, from memos to scholarly documents.
- Many of the resulting items will be peripheral or useless for your research.
- The following domains can help you identify the sources of most information:
  - edu for educational or research material*
  - gov for government resources*
  - mil for military*
  - com for commercially sponsored sites
  - org for organizations

(*These domains indicate reliable sites.)
Consider the content:

- The author should be identified.
- Author's expertise on the subject should be noted. You may need to trace back in the URL (Internet address) to view a page in a higher directory with background information.
- The tilde (~) in the URL may indicate a personal home page without official sanction from the originating source.
- Contact information, such as a mail-to link, should be listed on any site to allow users to request additional information or to provide comments.
Currency:

- Depending on your topic, currency may be of great importance to you in your research.
- Look to see if the site has been updated recently, as reflected in the date on the page.
- A number of broken links may indicate that the page has not been recently updated.