Guidelines for Evaluating Internet Sites

Indian River State College Libraries

Authority

Credibility of site
- Did you examine the headers, the footers, and the site address to locate the sponsor?
- Is the sponsor noted for expertise in the subject area?
- Did you note the site’s affiliation?

Be aware of misleading URLs (Uniform Resource Locators – the Internet address). For example, www.harvard.com is not Harvard University.

.aero – aviation, air travel .mil - military
.arts - cultural .museum – museums, archives, exhibitions
.biz - businesses .name - individuals
.com - commercial .net - networked organizations
.coop – business/ cooperatives .org - non-profit organizations
.edu - educational .pro – doctors, lawyers, licensed professionals
.firm - businesses .rec - recreational
.gov - governmental .info – libraries, newspapers, info sites
.int - international .store - companies selling
 .web - World Wide Web

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) made significant changes to the assignment of domain names. Beginning in 2012, generic top-level domains (gTLDs) can be registered to identify corporations, people, and places.

- Are the authors field experts with credentials?
- Is the site archived electronically?
- Does the site provide a link to the creator of the page so questions can be asked?
- Has the site has been rated or received awards? If so, what criteria were followed for the rating/award?
- Does the site provide a link back to a reputable home page?

Content

Availability of resource
- Is the site accessible via multiple Internet pages?
- Is the information reproduced in other formats (print, online, CD-ROM, etc.)?

Comprehensive or unique
- What is the purpose of the site?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Does the site provide new information?
- Is the information based on fact or opinion?
- Does the site cover the subject well?
- Is the information unavailable elsewhere?
- Is the information comparable to information found at similar sites?
- Is the source full-text?
- Is the Internet version the most current or the most complete version?
Currency

- Does the site provide links to newer content, if subject updated?
- Is the site updated on a regular basis?
- Is the site visited often?
- Does the site indicate when page created or updated?

Ease of Use

- Is the site easy to access? Use the 3-click rule.
- Can logon can be scripted?
- Are search techniques similar to other sites?
- Is user help available online?
- Is user support available?
- Are instructions easily grasped?
- Is the page logically organized?

Accessibility

- Is the site available on a consistent basis?
- Is there a text-based alternative?
- Does the site have a quick response time?

Search Engine

- Are clear instructions, Boolean capabilities, and keyword searching available?
- Is the output well formatted and understood?
- Are searches ranked by relevance?

Design

- Are the graphics well placed?
- Is the layout easy to follow?
- Is the layout uncluttered?
- Does the page have a sense of color and style?
- Does the site provide links to navigate throughout the page?
- Is the information displayed legibly?
- Do added features (graphics, sound, etc.) enhance or inhibit use of the site?
- Is there a text based alternative?
- Does the site have helpful design features?

Cost and Copyright

- Are subscription or access costs reasonable and justified?
- Is it easy to comply with restrictions on duplication and dissemination?

Hardware and Software

- Will you have to change your hardware and software?