

GEOL 440 -- Library Workshop

Evaluating and citing Web sites

Information on the Web can originate from many different sources including individuals, organizations, governments, academic institutions and companies. It is therefore important to quickly assess the reliability of the sources you find.

Criteria for evaluating Web sites

- **Currency**
 - What is the creation and revision date of the site?
- **Authority**
 - What are the author's credentials (education, employment)?
 - Who is responsible for the site (an organization, an interest group, a corporation, a government agency, etc.)?
 - Is there an "About Us" or "Contact Us" section?
 - What can you learn from the URL? Web addresses can inform you about the nature of a website. To learn more, visit:
 - [Understanding and decoding URLs](#): John Hopkins University Library
 - [Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask](#): UC Berkeley Library
- **Purpose**
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - Is the purpose to entertain, inform or sell?
 - What type of information is being conveyed?
- **Point of view**
 - Is the information factual or an interpretation of facts?
 - Are there any stereotypes, assumptions, opinions, etc.?
 - Do advertisements influence the content?
 - Are various points of view, theories and opinions represented equally?
- **Links (to the site or from the site)**
 - Are there links to or from reputable websites?

For a list of useful guides to evaluating web sources see [How to use the Web for research](#).

Citing Web sites

Web pages, as with journal articles, books, encyclopedias and other material you consult when researching an assignment, need to be properly cited in a bibliography, a reference list or a list of works cited. [Citation & Style Guides](#) provide more information on how to cite Web resources.