ABCs of Web Evaluation

Authority

• Who wrote the pages on this site?
  Anyone can publish on the Internet! Look for the name of the author or organisation that claims responsibility for the page.

• Is the author an expert in the field?
  Does their background qualify them to write on this topic? eg: doctor

• What type of domain does it come from?
  E.g.: .gov - Government sites; .edu - Educational sites

• Who published the document?
  The publisher is the agency or person operating the server from which the document is issued. The server is usually named in the first portion of the URL. E.g.: www.penguinbooks.com.au

Bias

• Why was this site created?
  Was it created to persuade, inform, explain or sell? E.g.: a commercial company promoting its own products may not provide the correct information.

• Does the information present only one point of view?

• Is the information factual or is it based on opinion?

Content

• Is the information easy to understand, accurate and comprehensive?
  CAUTION: Undated factual or statistical information is no better than anonymous information. Don’t use it.

• When was the site last updated?

• Is the information documented with footnotes or links?
  Take the time to explore these. Are the sites reputable or scholarly?

• Do the links work?
  Links that don’t work weaken the credibility of your research.

Design

• Is the site easy to navigate?

• Is there a well-labelled contents area?

• Are there spelling errors?

HINT: Before entering a site from a list of search results, find out all you can from the URLs of each page. Choose pages most likely to be reliable and authentic.