A Checklist for Evaluating Information from the WWW

You should always evaluate information found on the Web. START is an acronym that will help you remember the five categories of criteria for evaluating information sources found on the Web. The letters in the acronym stand for: Scope, Treatment, Authority, Relevance, and Timeliness

Read to familiarize yourself with the five categories of criteria in the 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 test?

**Treatment**
- Is the information present as 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?

**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?
- Is the author affiliated with an education 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 web site for 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?

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