

CONSIDER THE SOURCE: Evaluating Research Tools

	Print and Library Databases	Internet (World Wide Web)
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author's name given? What experience, education, or credentials does the author have relevant to the topic? • Is the publisher well known or a government agency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone can publish anything on the Web. • The domain name indicates the sponsor of a site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ professional associations (.org) ○ government (.gov) ○ educational institution (.edu) ○ commercial business (.com) ○ network (often commercial) (.net) • Is the name of a contact person, webmaster, or organization given?
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are sources of information clearly stated? • Is the author affiliated with a special interest group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are sources of data given and are they reliable? • Links to other web sites must also be checked for accuracy.
Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the author present varied aspects of an issue or is he promoting a certain opinion? • What sources are cited for the information given as facts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web pages exist for many different purposes: to advertise an idea or product, promote an individual's views, or to entertain. • Anybody can create a web page.
Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some research the most current information is needed. Other research requires that a topic be followed through time using sources from years ago. • Check publication date of the book in hand. Also review the publication dates of the works cited as references. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A web page should give the date created or most recently updated. • Web pages are often short lived. What you see one week may be revised or disappear the following week. Keep a record of the date you visit a site and include that date when you cite your sources.
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the information thoroughly cover the topic chosen? • Does it add new information or merely repeat points already found? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the information at a level appropriate to your needs? Is it too simple, technical, or general for your purposes?

From <http://library.shastacollege.edu/webevaluation.html>