

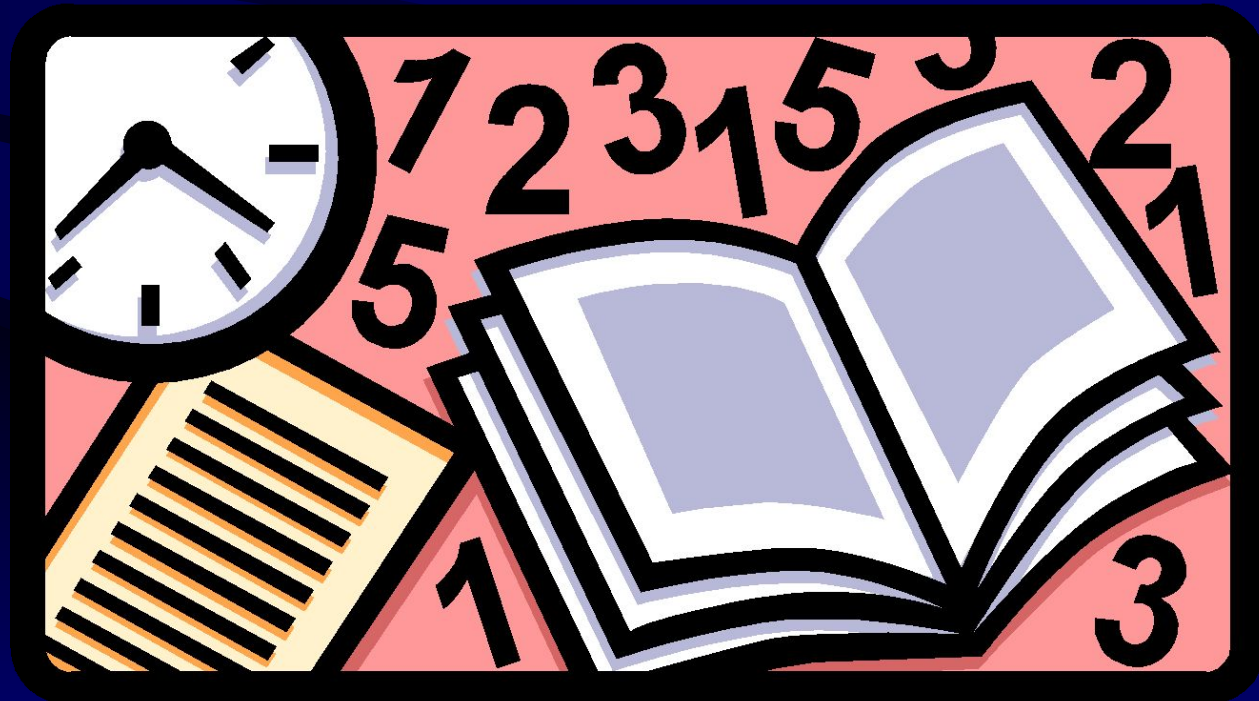
Assessing Resources

Print & Internet Resources



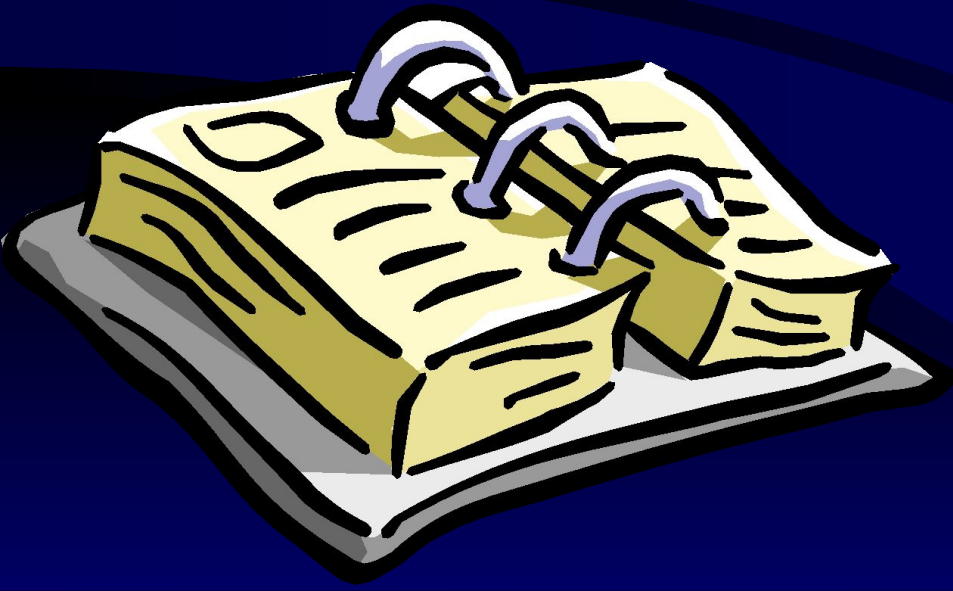
A ABC

- The quality of any text needs to be assessed before using and citing it
- Not all sources are equally reliable or of equal quality
- Focus on:
 - accuracy
 - authority
 - bias
 - currency



Accuracy

- Does the text address the content requirements for the task?
- Does the text provide thorough and complete information?



Authority

- Is the source of the text an institution, publication, or individual with credibility in the field?



Bias

- Is the text influenced by a political, commercial, or social interest, which puts the validity of its information in question?



Currency

- Are the author's sources current, or are they outdated?



Internet Resources

- Assessing Internet resources is a challenge
- Print publications are generally issued by reputable publishers that accept accountability for the quality and reliability of the works they distribute
- Few electronic publications currently have comparable authority:
 - Online materials are often self-published, without any outside review

Evaluating Web Sites

- Even after refining a query in a search engine, a researcher often retrieves a huge number of web sites
- It is essential to know how to evaluate websites for the same reasons you would evaluate a periodical article or a book:
 - *to ascertain whether you can rely on the information*
 - *to identify its inherent biases or limitations*
 - *to see how or whether it fits into your overall research strategy*

A good Internet site...



Source: Caravello, Patti S. "Judging Quality on the Web." 2001. UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library Reference & Instructional Services Department. 22 Feb. 2007

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/url/referenc/judging.htm>.

1. Clearly states the author and/or organizational source of the information

- Consider the qualifications, other works, and organizational affiliation of the author
- Look up the organization which produced the website to identify its credentials, viewpoint, or agenda
- If the source is an E-journal, discover whether it is refereed (reviewed by scholars before it is accepted for publication)



2. Clearly states the date the material was written and the date the site was last revised

- If the information is not current enough for your purposes or the date is not given, look elsewhere



3. Provides accurate data whose parameters are clearly defined

- Compare the data found on the website with data found in other sources (encyclopedias, reference books, articles, etc.) for accuracy, completeness, and currency



4. Provides the type and level of information needed

- Decide whether the level of detail and comprehensiveness, the treatment of the topic (e.g., scholarly or popular), and the graphics or other features are acceptable
- If the site does not provide the depth of coverage you need, look elsewhere



5. Keeps bias to a minimum, and clearly indicates point of view

- Be aware that producing a web page does not require the checking and review that publishing a scholarly book requires; you might have retrieved nothing but someone's personal opinion on the topic
- The appealing graphics can distract you from noticing even overt bias, so heighten your skepticism and examine the evidence (source, date, accuracy, level, links)



6. Provides live links to related high quality websites

- Click on several of the links provided to see if they are active (or if they give an "error" message indicating the links are not being maintained) and to see if they are useful



7. (In the case of a commercial site), keeps advertising separate from content, and does not let advertisers determine content

- Look at the web address: Sites that are commercial have *.com* in their addresses and might have advertising or offer to sell something.
- The *.com* suffix is also found in news sites (e.g., newspapers, TV networks) and personal pages (sites created by individuals who have purchased a domain name but who may or may not have a commercial or institutional affiliation)
- Suffixes that end in **.edu** are generally from reputable sources



8. Is clearly organized and designed for ease of use

- Move around the page to see if its organization makes sense and it is easy to return to the top or to the sections you need
- Decide whether the graphics enhance the content or detract from it



Thanks for listening!

