Checklist for Evaluating Research Resources

Evaluation Criteria

Currency | Authority | Accuracy | Relevance | Objectivity/Purpose of Content

**Currency**
- When was the source published or the website updated?
- Is the source current or out-of-date for your topic?
- Have newer articles been published on your topic?
- Is this information which needs to be updated constantly, or is it suitable for long-term use?
- Does your topic require only recent information, or do you need to use original source documents, regardless of how old they are?
- Old is not necessarily bad, depending upon your topic. Does your topic require primary source documents, secondary source documents, or both?

**Authority**
- Who wrote the article?
- Does the website provide an author’s name?
- What are the author’s credentials?
- Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or prominent organization?
- Is the author a recognized expert who is frequently cited or quoted in other works on this topic?
- Is the author reliable and trustworthy?

**Accuracy**
- Is your source reliable and error-free?
- Does it have statements that you know to be false?
- Was the information reviewed by editors or subject experts before it was published?
- Does this source present information that is consistent with other sources on this topic?
- Does the author provide citations and references to support his claims?
Relevance
- Does the information answer your research question?
- Does it meet the stated requirements of your assignment?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information too technical or too simplified for your topic?
- Does the source provide an overview of your entire topic, or is it specifically focused on only one aspect of your topic?

Objectivity/Purpose of Content
- Why was this information created?
- What was the author trying to achieve?
- What point of view does the author represent?
- Is the information balanced, and does it include alternative points of view?
- Have you gotten this document from a website or source that you know to be reliable?
- What is the domain of the website, and is it appropriate for your topic? (i.e. .gov, .mil, .edu, .com, .org, etc.)
- Is the website sponsored by a company or organization that advocates a certain point of view?