

The Six A's for Evaluating Web Content



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"Are you ready?" Initiation in cyberspace - or Metanoia

"Casual users and serious researchers place their trust in the accuracy and completeness of the data on the network. They're relying upon information of unknown pedigree and dubious quality, since little on the Internet has been refereed or reviewed."

Clifford Stoll, **Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway.**¹
New York: Doubleday. 125.

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You are smart and technology-wise, but the Web - i.e., vertical, horizontal, deep, hidden, dark, and invisible - requires additional skills and hence the following information literacy session.



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I. Authority

- Who is responsible for the content and is the contact information available?
- Who is the publisher and is he/she other than the Webmaster / Webmistress?



Consider the source²

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II. Accuracy

- How factual and verifiable is the content - Is the information cited correctly?
- See the domain of the Website: what type of institution publishes the content? - that is the institution belongs to Light Web or the Dark Web.



When in doubt, doubt.³



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III. Approach

- ☐ What is the purpose of the content and why was it produced?
- ☐ What goals does the content depict? [advertising vs. educational]
- ☐ How subjective is the information?



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IV. Age Online

- ❖ When was it produced? - current or once upon...
- ❖ When was it last updated? Recently, never, ...
- ❖ How many dead links are on the page?



Is it Timely

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V. Audience Level

- ✓ is the content generic or specific?
- ✓ Is the content for any one type or level of users?



Look for the Value.⁴

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VI. Accessibility

- ✓ Design, color, text, image synchronized?
- ✓ is there clear indication of whether the entire work or only a portion is available on the Web?
- ✓ Is the site under construction?




Look at details.⁴

Quiz for review

Compare two statistical sites related to **women and AIDS**.⁴ <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/training/think5.html>



References

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2. www2.pvc.maricopa.edu/rebadow/softchalk/WebSiteEvaluation.html
3. <http://www.thevargroup.co.uk/DeepSix.htm>
4. <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/training/think5.html>
5. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/undwebev.html>
6. <http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/isu/library/documents/WebEvaluation.ppt>
7.  **Teachers' Guide**

References (continued)

8. www.utc.edu/Administration/WalkerTeachingResourceCenter/FacultyDevelopment/InternetResearch/documentation.html
9. www.iwebtool.com/tools/
10. www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/EvalForm_General_Barker.pdf
11. <http://www.neisd.net/et/eir/chart.html>

READINGS

- Karla's Guide to Citation Style Guides
<http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/journalism/cite.html>
- Better Read That Again: Web Hoaxes and Misinformation
<http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/sep00/piper.htm>
- Web Awareness for Teachers <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm>
- Ivory, M. Automated Web Site Evaluation. Kluwer Academic, 2003
- In Google we trust: Information integrity in the digital age by Lee Shaker, *First Monday*, volume 11, number 4 (April 2006),
http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_4/shaker/index.html

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Favorite Tool

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BOTTOM LINE: Is the web page as good as
(or better than) what you could find in
journal articles or
other published literature that is not on the
free, general web?¹⁰



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