Checklist for Evaluating Information Sources
Thinking of using a website as an information source for your research paper or project? Be sure you fully evaluate it first.

Authority
- Is the author or organization credited on the document?
- Are the author’s credentials listed: their education, affiliations, other writings?
- Is contact information clearly provided?
- Is the author or publisher affiliated with or sponsored by a known university, business, or other organization?
- What does the URL tell you? Has the site won any Web awards for excellence?
- Is the site maintained and updated? Are the links viable? Are there spelling and grammatical errors?

Bias/Balance
- Can you detect any political, philosophical, religious or other bias in the information?
- Are opposing or differing viewpoints presented to balance the information, or is there only a single point of view?
- If it is a position page that advocates a certain idea, does the author clearly state his or her agenda?
- Is the information supported with footnotes, works cited, or links?

Audience/Scope
- Does the site cover the topic sufficiently?
- Who is the site’s intended audience: children, specialists, the general public? Sites written for grade school audiences are not suitable for college papers.
- Does the site link to other quality sites on the same subject?

Purpose
- Is the book, article, or site created to inform, persuade or sell a product?
- Is it clearly an editorial or opinion piece? If so, does the author offer evidence for his or her claims?
- Is the mission of the site clearly stated? Does it link to a sponsoring organization or group, with their stated agenda?
- Is the information applicable to your topic?

Currency
- Is the date the page was created, written or updated clearly shown?
- Is the information current enough to use? This will depend on the subject of your research.