**Evaluating Internet Resources Library Guide**

* Be very careful in your use of what you find on the Internet.
* Not everything you find is trustworthy
* A good rule of thumb regarding information found on the Internet is: "They are all guilty until proven innocent."

In approaching Internet information, look for the qualities listed below. If any of them are missing, a red flag should go up and you should reconsider using the source.

**Credibility**

**Goal: An authoritative source that supplies trustworthy information.**

* Is the source trustworthy? Does the web address end with any of the following: .gov, .mil, .edu? These tend to be trustworthy.
* ​​Are author credentials given? Is the author a known or respected authority? If you are unsure, search the Internet to see if the person has published anything on the subject.
* Is there evidence of quality control? Are there misspelled words and bad grammar?
* Does the source have organizational support? What is the organization? Is it well-known and well-respected? Even if the document is anonymous, if it is from a well-known organization, it is probably acceptable to use. The organization should have verified the information in the document is credible.

**Accuracy**

**Goal: A source that is correct today (not yesterday) and that gives the whole truth.**

* Is the source up to date? In certain fields (for example: medicine, business, science) old information may not be accurate anymore.
* Is it factual, detailed, exact, and comprehensive?
* Does the purpose of the document reflect the intentions of completeness and accuracy?
* Is it a level appropriate for your use? Or is it written for a younger, less sophisticated audience?

**Reasonable**

**Goal: A source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably.**

* Is the document balanced, objective, and reasoned?
* Is there a conflict of interest? Does the information seem to give support to any advertisers?
* Is there a slanted tone? Sites with strong opinions, backed up with facts are alright, provided they are fair to their opponents.

**Support**

**Goal: A source that provides convincing evidence for its claims and which is confirmed by other sources.**

* Does the author provide information on how to contact him/her so you can discuss their information?
* Are the claims made by the author supported with evidence? Or are they unsubstantiated?
* Are the sources from which the author took his/her information documented? Is there a bibliography? This is especially important with statistical information.
* Is the information given corroborated by other sources? Does it correspond with what you might already know about the subject, or does it contradict what you know to be true?