Evaluating Website Content

No one person or group checks that all web content is accurate, so YOU MUST!
Attempting to answer the following questions about a particular web site will help to determine if the site is a valid source for your research needs. You may not find answers to each question, but the investigative process should allow you to weigh the overall legitimacy of the web site and help you to refine your evaluating skills.

Name of the Web Site: ________________________________________________________________
Web Address / URL : ________________________________________________________________
Purpose of the Site: ________________________________________________________________

1. Accuracy
   ❖ Is the content free of spelling and grammatical errors?
   ❖ Is the site easily navigable, well organized and functional?
   ❖ Are sources provided so the information can be verified?

2. Authority
   ❖ Who is the author of the material on the website?
   ❖ Can you determine if the author is qualified to speak authoritatively on this topic?
   ❖ Are there clues about who sponsors the larger site and what their motive is?
   ❖ Are you able to find contact information for this person or group?
   ❖ Does the content on the site contain a bibliography or a list of reputable sources?

3. Currency
   ❖ Can you determine when the site was copyrighted, created or last updated?
   ❖ Are all the hyperlinks on the website working correctly?
   ❖ In the absence of a copyright or revision date, does the content of the website allow you to determine if the information is current?

4. Coverage
   ❖ Is the website partially constructed or fully completed?
   ❖ Is there a comprehensive range of content or merely links to other web pages?

5. Objectivity
   ❖ Why is this information being posted (identify the goals or objectives)?
   ❖ Is the author’s point of view obvious and does it reflect a bias?
   ❖ Is the information intended to persuade the reader toward a particular way of thinking?
   ❖ Does the site link to external, non-affiliated websites or only to other websites with similar points-of-view?

Also Ask:  Will the information be useful for my topic?
           How does the information compare with other information I have gathered?
           Is the information consistent with my knowledge of the topic?