

Finding Information on the Internet is Only the First Step

Users Must Evaluate Electronic Information With Care

The Internet is loaded with information. Information, however, is only as good as its source. If we live in an "information age," then we must develop skills in determining if the information we are relying on is really any good.

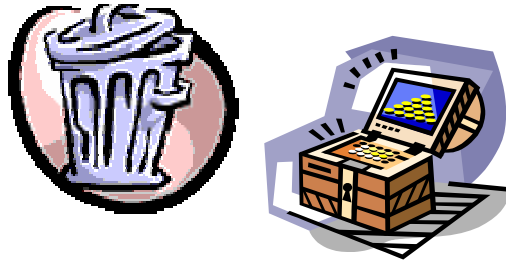
Anyone anywhere in the world can post information on the Internet. Is it true? Does it mislead? Does it accurately present situations in a fair context? How should we determine what information on the Internet is really any good?

Publishing or locating information on the web is relatively easy. Sometimes, this information is not accurate or reliable. Anyone that uses information from the Internet should be careful. The Internet is an example of "*caveat lector*." Let the reader beware!

Viewing Web Pages

Web pages are designed to have different looks -- that's what makes surfing the net so much fun. Most popular web sites combine pictures, sounds, animation, links, and information. Some web sites that are loaded up with all the "whistles and bells," but after reading them, have little information of value.









Trash or Treasure?









On the Information Superhighway



What are some things to look for when viewing web pages? Well for starters:

-  Did the page take long to load?
-  Do graphics enhance the site?
-  Are sections of the page clearly labeled?
-  Who is responsible for the content?
-  Can you contact the creator(s) of the site?
-  When was the information updated last?
-  Are the links helpful?
-  Are the links clearly laid out?

What about the information on the site? Consider the following:

-  Does the title tell you what the page is about?
-  Is the information useful to you?
-  Is the information current enough?
-  Does this information contradict other information you've gathered?
-  Does the site make claims such as "best, worst, always, or never?"
-  Is the author qualified to share information on this subject?

Evaluating Information

Author. Good resources identify who is behind information. If readers cannot understand or appreciate the expertise or authority of the source, why bother to read that information? Look for names and e-mail addresses so that you can always contact him or her regarding qualifications. When a site does not clearly identify the credentials of site, perhaps another search for the author's name or organization on the web is in order.

Content. Why is this information on the web, does the site state its purpose. Do not take information on the Internet at face value. Look for references and citations that say where facts and figures come from.

Currency. How old is the information and how often is it updated? Medical and technological information, for example, needs to be updated constantly to be accurate. Historical perspectives, on the other hand, may not. Most sites have links to take views to additional useful sites. Watch out for links that are no longer active or "dead links." Be careful of sites that voice strong opinions -- when facts are clearly presented there is no need to tell readers what to think about them.

Copyright. Exclusive rights, granted by law, for a literary musical, or artistic work is called a copyright. Who "owns" the information you are reading on a web site.



Internet Detective

<http://www.sosig.ac.uk/desire/internet-detective.html>



Evaluation Survey 2

Here is a simple survey that we can use to help evaluate information on the Internet. Please choose any two web sites and complete this survey.

URL

1. Can you identify the author of the page?
Yes No
2. Is an e-mail address listed?
Yes No
3. Can you access site in a reasonable time?
Yes No
4. Is the text on the screen legible?
Yes No
5. Are the commands and directions easy to follow?
Yes No
6. Is the information current?
Yes No
7. Did your search lead you to what you expected?
Yes No
8. Are the instructions clear?
Yes No
9. Is the information updated regularly?
Yes No

Please make any comment about this site:

Evaluation Survey 1

Here is a simple survey that we can use to help evaluate information on the Internet. Please choose any two web sites and complete this survey.

URL

1. Can you identify the author of the page?
Yes No
2. Is an e-mail address listed?
Yes No
3. Can you access site in a reasonable time?
Yes No
4. Is the text on the screen legible?
Yes No
5. Are the commands and directions easy to follow?
Yes No
6. Is the information current?
Yes No
7. Did your search lead you to what you expected?
Yes No
8. Are the instructions clear?
Yes No
9. Is the information updated regularly?
Yes No

10. Please make any comment about this site:

This on-line tutorial has some good information about evaluating the quality of the information you locate of the Internet. Please go to this URL, and click on the **English** version.

Click on the link, "Issues of Quality." Then read each page of this link and click on the "next" button. Read the pages and take the short "quizzes" to review the material. Getting more out of your Internet searches will be a valuable skill that you can have a great deal of fun with.

Please scroll through the site and take the quizzes at the end of each section. You will have the rest o the period to work with this tutorial -- please review it at a comfortable pace. Please write down your scores for each "quiz" you take.

Quiz 1

Quiz 2

Quiz 3

Quiz 4

Quiz 5