

In today's hi-tech world, information resources are expanding at an exponential rate. Savvy students need to carefully evaluate information resources, especially sources used for academic study. Information comes in many formats. Sometimes information is found in *hard copy* (book, article or report). Sometimes that book or article is available in *electronic format* (ebooks, research databases). Sometimes information is found from a *video* or from a *web page*. Because web publishing is open to anyone, special attention needs to be given to web-based resources, but the *basic* criteria for determining the validity/value of an information source is the same for every information format.

Basic Criteria for Evaluating Information Sources

Authorship

- What are the author's qualifications?
- Does the author provide biographical information?

Publishing Body

- Is an organization/publisher name provided on the document?
- Is this organization/publisher an established authority?
- What is the relationship between the author and the organization?

Objectivity

- Is the information presented free from bias? Is the bias easily recognizable?
- Does the author have a hidden agenda?

Accuracy

- Is there any way to verify the accuracy of the information provided?
- Is the information reliable and free from error?
- Has the information been modified?
- How was the information derived? Is it based on personal opinion, experience, interviews, library research, questionnaires, laboratory experiments?
- Is the information refereed or reviewed by other scholars? Are there standards or selection criteria that must be met to be included in this source?

Currency

- Does the document include a publication date or "last updated" date?
- Does the document have a copyright date?

Coverage

- Is the subject covered in-depth and comprehensively?
- Are references provided to additional sources?
- Is the information presented at a level that is appropriate for your purposes?