Website Evaluation List — Use this list to evaluate the information you have found on the world wide web.

Who created this website? What are their credentials? How do you know they are an intelligent source? Are they a teacher at a school? A college professor with a PhD? A doctor with an MD? What makes them an expert?

- If you can’t find an author who is an expert on the information you have found, think twice about using it. Do you really want an anonymous, unknown author to support your ideas?

Is there a way to contact the website creator/webmaster? Look for the site’s creator at the top or bottom of the website’s pages: either “Contact Us” or “About Us” links are common.

- A website that is not maintained by a webmaster will have broken links, images that don’t load properly, and other problems. Any good website is maintained on a regular basis by a webmaster to prevent such problems.

Is the website current? Look at the top or bottom of the Home page for a message that indicates: “Last updated dd/mm/yy” or “Website revised dd/mm/yy”. Reliable websites are updated regularly.

- For example, if you write a paper about technology, you’ll want to find information that is up-to-date. If there is no date on the website, you have no idea how old the information might be.

Is the information accurate? Take a quick look to see if you can find spelling errors, bad grammar/punctuation, casual use of language, or inappropriate comments.

- Reliable websites will contain professionally written information.

Why does this website exist? Is the purpose made clear? Who is the intended audience? Do you detect subjective opinion or bias? Does the website sell something?

- A simple example of bias: the Apple iPhone webpage describes itself as the best phone in the world. The Droid webpage also describes itself as the best phone in the world. To actually find out which one is the best, you might instead check Consumer Reports for an unbiased comparison.