


Evaluating Web Sites



Serving the Underserved III

YALSA

January 2001



Some of the questions you should ask when assessing Internet resources are the same ones you might ask when looking at traditional resources.



Purpose

Every site has a reason for being there.

Purpose



- What is the purpose of the site?
- Are the scope and limits clearly stated?
- Who is the intended audience?
 - Is the content suitable for teens?
 - Is the site design appealing to teens?
 - Are young adults involved in the creation and/or maintenance of the site?
 - What need does the site fill?

Authority



Who put up the site?

Authority

- Who is the author?
- What credentials are listed for the author?
- Is a contact address provided?
- Who is the sponsoring institution?
- What are the qualifications of the publisher?
 - Check the URL domain.
- Is the information copyrighted?
- Is this a stable, reliable site?

Accuracy



- Is the information accurate and unbiased?
- Is the information well-researched and documented?
- Are opinions clearly identified?

Currency



- When was the site published?
- How often is the material updated?

Content




A great site shares content that educates,
informs and entertains.

Content



- How effective is the content? Is it verifiable?
- Does the content add to the existing body of knowledge in a unique way?
- How detailed is the site's coverage of its subject?
- Is the information primary or secondary in nature?
- Do the images enhance the content?
- Is advertising present?



In addition to these general questions, there are areas which pertain primarily to online resources.

Technical Quality

- Is there an option for “text only,” frames, or a browser suggested for viewing?
- Is special software required to view the site?
- Is there a charge to use the site?
- Is the site interactive?
- Is there online help?
- Are the screens well organized and easy to navigate?
- Does the site take a long time to load?
- Can you search the site?
- Is there a site map?
- Is this a site you would want to visit more than once?

Links



- What are the link selection criteria?
- Are there dead links?
- Do the links complement the site?

Online Reviewing Agencies

- Argus Clearinghouse
 - www.clearinghouse.net
- Beaucoup
 - www.beaucoup.com
- Best of the Web
 - www.bofw.com
- Blue Web'n
 - www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluewebn
- Choice
 - www.ala.org/acrl/choice
- Internet Tourbus
 - 204.96.11.210/wv/hotel/tourbus
- Library Journal Digital WebWatch
 - www.bookwire.com/ljdigital/webwatch.article

Online Reviewing Agencies

- Lycos Top 5
 - point.lycos.com
- Magellan Internet Guide Web Reviews
 - www.mckinley.com
- Scout Report
 - scout.cs.wisc.edu/scout/report
- Yahoo! Internet Life
 - www.zdnet.com/yil/filters/channels/reviews.html