Evaluating Web Sites

Directions

Familiarize yourself with the definitions below. Then complete the chart on the next page. Explore the websites while evaluating their authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency, and coverage.

- **authority**

  Definition: Author is easily identified in the documentation; qualified to write and publish on the subject; affiliated with a credible and reputable institution and/or publisher. The author is well-known and respected in the field of study.

- **accuracy**

  Definition: It is noted on the Web page that the information is peer-reviewed, edited, and all facts have been checked. There are no typos in the text and the information is presented coherently.

- **objectivity**

  Definition: Information is presented without bias; both sides of the issue are represented; the author, institution, and/or publisher are not using the information to influence the reader and serve their own interests. The author acknowledges any controversial aspects or limitations to the information/research they are providing.

- **currency**

  Definition: Information is up-to-date or very recently updated; the date of the last update is clearly displayed. For primary and seminal works in a subject area, the currency element is irrelevant, as the inherent worth of the work gives it longevity.

- **coverage**

  Definition: The content reflects the author has a knowledge of the subject matter and is aware of current trends in the field. The author shows knowledge of schools of thought, theories, and methodologies appropriate for research in the subject areas addressed. The document provides the information proposed in the thesis statement and additional resources, such as a bibliographies, works cited, links to other relevant Web sites, and information about similar research and researchers in the subject area are offered. All information offered is cited in the appropriate format for the subject areas and is verifiable.

Directions

1. Explore the three websites below independently.

2. Evaluate each site on its authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency, and coverage. The total should be the average of all the scores. Select a score of 0-3 for each section (with 1 being the lowest and 3 being the highest, or best score). Use the following guidelines in the scoring process:

■0 = does not meet the criteria
■1 = meets some of the criteria

■2 = meets most of the criteria relevant to this particular site
■3 = meets or exceeds the relevant criteria for this particular site

	Authority	Accuracy	Objectivity	Currency	Coverage	Total
Legal guide to Hazelwood and viewpoint suppression https://splc.org/2015/11/differing-opinions_0501/						
First Amendment in Schools https://ncac.org/resource/first-amendment-in-schools						
ACLU: Ask Sybil Liberty http://www.aclu.org/free-speech/ask-sybil-liberty-about-your-right-free-expression						