



10 C's for Evaluating Internet Resources

Guide

library.reference@uwec.edu ■ (715) 836-3858 ■ www.uwec.edu/library

McINTYRE LIBRARY
Your Information Advantage

The "Ten C's" provide criteria to consider in evaluating Internet resources. This Guide is also available on the web at <http://www.uwec.edu/Library/research/guides/upload/tencs.pdf>

1. Content

What is the intent of the content? Are the title and author identified? Is the content "juried"? Is the content "popular" or "scholarly", satiric or serious? What is the date of the document or article? Is the "edition" current? Do you have the latest version? (Is this important?) How do you know?

2. Credibility

Is the author identifiable and reliable? Is the content credible? Authoritative? Should it be? What is the purpose of the information, that is, is it serious, satiric, humorous? Is the URL extension .edu, .com, .gov or .org? What does this tell you about the "publisher"?

3. Critical Thinking

How can you apply critical thinking skills, including previous knowledge and experience, to evaluate Internet resources? Can you identify the author, publisher, edition, etc. as you would with a "traditionally" published resource? What criteria do you use to evaluate Internet resources?

4. Copyright

Even if the copyright notice does not appear prominently, someone wrote, or is responsible for, the creation of a document, graphic, sound or image, and the material falls under the copyright conventions.

"Fair use" applies to short, cited excerpts, usually as an example for commentary or research. Materials are in the "public domain" if this is explicitly stated. Internet users, as users of print media, must respect copyright.

5. Citations

Internet resources should be cited to identify sources used, both to give credit to the author and to provide the reader with avenues for further research. Standard style manuals (print and online) provide some examples of how to cite Internet documents, although these standards are not uniform.

6. Continuity

Will the Internet site be maintained and updated? Is it now and will it continue to be free? Can you rely on this source over time to provide up-to-date information? Some good .edu sites have moved to .com, with possible cost implications. Other sites offer partial use for free, and charge fees for continued or in-depth use.

7. Censorship

Is your discussion list "moderated"? What does this mean? Does your search engine or index look for all words or are some words excluded? Is this censorship? Does your institution, based on its mission, parent organization or space limitations, apply some restrictions to Internet use? Consider censorship and privacy issues when using the Internet.

8. Connectivity

What technical requirements, from connectivity mode and speed, to ancillary software, are needed? What type of connection (from dial-up to high speed networks) is required to achieve the desired purpose? What programs, extensions, or plug-ins (such as multi-media, animation, special graphics, data manipulation, blogs, feeds or other "e-learning" applications) are needed for functionality? Do users have access to and are users familiar with the required applications? Do users have adequate technical support sources for connectivity and other technical issues?

9. Comparability _____

Does the Internet resource have an identified comparable print or CD ROM data set or source? Does the Internet site contain comparable and complete information? (For example, some newspapers have partial but not full text information on the Internet.) Do you need to compare data or statistics over time? Can you identify sources for comparable earlier or later data? Comparability of data may or may not be important, depending on your project.

10. Context _____

What is the context for your research? Can you find "anything" on your topic, that is, commentary, opinion, narrative, statistics and your quest will be satisfied? Are you looking for current or historical information? Definitions? Research studies or articles? How does Internet information fit in the overall information context of your subject? Before you start searching, define the research context and research needs and decide what sources might be best to use to successfully fill information needs without data overload.

The Ten C's were developed 1991-1996; revisions were made June 19, 2003 and also October 30, 2008. For further information contact Betsy Richmond at richmoeb@uwec.edu. Please feel free to use (unmodified) with attribution.