

Appendix U: Internet site validity handout

Website Reliability

How can you tell if something you're reading is true and reliable?

Believe it or not, the web does not always contain accurate information. In fact, every once in a while, you might come across something that (gasp!) is **not true**. Well, that's to be expected, really – the web is made by people, and people aren't perfect, and people make up a LOT of coo-coo-crazy stuff.

- ★ For each category, ask yourself these questions to see if your website is a good one. If you answer "No" to the questions, it probably isn't a source you would want to include in your reference or works cited page:

Who's In Charge? Determine Authority

- ✓ Is it absolutely clear which company or organization is responsible for the information on the site?
- ✓ Is there a link to a page describing the company or organization (an "About Us" page)?
- ✓ Is there a way to contact the company?

Are You Telling Me The Truth? Determine Accuracy

- ✓ Can I easily figure out who wrote the information?
- ✓ How long ago was the page updated? Is there a date stamp on the article somewhere? You'll need this if you're using MLA-style citation.

Are You Selling Me Something? Determine Motivation

- ✓ Does the writing seem like all one person's strong opinion?
- ✓ Is the end of the website address what you're looking for? (.edu = an educational organizational/ .gov = government site/ .org = non-profit organizations.)

Evaluating Sources on the Web – Use Common Sense

Use common sense when considering a website for your research project or paper. **Just because something made its way on to the internet does not mean true.**

Modified from:

Boswell, Wendy. "How to Evaluate a Website." *About.com* The New York Times Company, n.d. Web. 3 Dec. 2009.
<<http://websearch.about.com/od/referencesearch/a/evaluatesource.htm>>.