

# Evaluation of Web Pages

- **SOURCE**
  - Can you CLEARLY and QUICKLY identify the author or creator of the web page?
  - The author or creator may be an organization or association.
- **CREDENTIALS**
  - Can you determine what the author's credentials are? Look to see if the author has written any other works, including books and periodical articles.
  - If the web page is located on a specific organization's web site, what do you know about the organization? You can try searching the web to see if anyone else has written about the organization. You could also try looking for information about the organization in reference books like the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, the *Left Guide: A Guide to Left-of-Center Organizations* and the *Right Guide: A Guide to Conservative and Right-of-Center Organizations*.
  - In the web page, is there an e-mail address for the author or creator?
- **TYPE OF INFORMATION**
  - Is the information scholarly, popular, governmental or from a private business?
  - Are the web pages intended to be entertaining, educational, business related, or personal opinions?
  - Who is the intended audience—the general public or other academics and researchers? Does the information really support your thesis and research questions?
- **PURPOSE**
  - Is the author making an argument for personal gain, offering an opinion, giving a factual report (such as news item), presenting a well researched scholarly opinion, or relaying a personal opinion?
  - Can you identify objective writing (both sides of the argument) or a subjective bias (expressing one's own point of view)?
- **SOURCES**
  - Can you determine where the author gathered the information, i.e. are there any citations?
  - Is the material from original research, experiments, observation, interviews, books and documents?
  - Are secondary references (a bibliography, for example) provided?
- **TIMELINESS**
  - When was the material published on the web? Was it published earlier in a printed format? Does your research demand only current information or can you use information that is older?
  - Can you determine if the web page has been updated frequently (if necessary)?
- **STYLE**
  - Is the writing style of the author clear and understandable? If not why not? Does the author legitimately need to use complex language because of the subject matter, or is the author using complex technical language to purposefully confuse the reader.
  - Are helpful charts, graphs, or pictures provided?