

The following checklist is excerpted from the *Troy University Libraries Tutorial*. Other than for individual use, please do not reproduce or transmit this document. Updated 10/21/08.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Consider the following criteria when deciding whether or not to use any source:

- Who are the authors and what are their credentials? What is their educational background and work experience? What else have they written? What other authors make reference to them or their works? With what institution, company, or organization are they affiliated?
- When was the information written, published, or updated?
- Does the document have a formal title? If it is an online document, does it have a printed/published counterpart?
- Who is the publisher?
- For articles, what type of publication is it? Is it a popular magazine or a peer-reviewed journal?
- Is the information primary, secondary, or tertiary?
- Who is the intended audience for this information? For what purpose was the information written or published?
- Is the information consistent with other information on the topic? Is the information substantiated by verifiable data and facts, or is it the author's opinion or propaganda?
- Is the information well researched, organized, and written?
- Are there reviews of the information, e.g., a review of a book, article, media, or Internet site?
- Does the information really pertain to the topic of your research/is this the type of material your instructor expects? Is this the type of material, either in physical format or content, which is well suited to the research you are performing?

Additional criteria for online sources (Internet sites):

- Was the document written by the operator of the Web site or someone else?
- Is one of the goals of the Web site or document to induce you to make a purchase or anything of that nature?
- Does the document provide references or links to other information that might clarify or verify its content?
- What type of site is providing the information? That is to say, is it the official site of a known individual, company, or organization, or is it one whose authenticity cannot be verified?
- What other Web pages link to the document in question? One way to check this is to perform a *link* search in the Google search engine. The format for this type of search is link:URL, e.g., link:<http://www.examplewebsite.com>. For example, using the Google search engine, searching on [link:http://www.troy.edu](http://www.troy.edu) will retrieve a list of Web sites that contain a link to the Troy University home page (the URL used in the search). The Alexa search engine, <<http://www.alexa.com>>, is an excellent tool for finding a wide variety of data and information regarding Web sites.