

Evaluate a Web Site in 5 Easy Steps

According to the University of California Berkeley Library, "Evaluating web pages skillfully requires you to do two things at once: 1) Train your eye and your fingers to employ a series of techniques that help you quickly find what you need to know about web pages; (and) 2) Train your mind to think critically, even suspiciously, by asking a series of questions that will help you decide how much a web page is to be trusted."

Among recommended procedures explained [Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask](#) are the following:

1. What can the URL tell you?

Techniques for Web Evaluation:

1. Before you leave the list of search results – before you click and get interested in anything written on the page – glean all you can from the URLs of each page.
2. Then choose pages most likely to be reliable and authentic.

2. Scan the perimeter of the page, looking for answers to these questions:

Techniques for Web Evaluation:

1. Look for links that say "**About us**," "**Philosophy**," "**Background**," "**Biography**", etc.
2. If you cannot find any links like these, you can often find this kind of information if you **Truncate back the URL**. INSTRUCTIONS for Truncating back a URL: In the top Location Box, delete the end characters of the URL stopping just before each / (leave the slash). Press enter to see if you can see more about the author or the origins/nature of the site providing the page.
Continue this process, one slash (/) at a time, until you reach the first single / which is preceded by the domain name portion. This is the page's server or "publisher."
3. Look for the date "last updated" – usually at the bottom of a web page.
Check the date on all the pages on the site.

3. Look for indicators of quality information:

Techniques for Web Evaluation:

1. Look for a link called "links," "additional sites," "related links," etc.
2. In the text, if you see little footnote numbers or links that might refer to documentation, take the time to explore them. What kinds of publications or sites are they? Reputable? Scholarly? Are they real? On the web (where no publisher is editing most pages), it is possible to create totally fake references.
3. Look at the publisher of the page (first part of the URL). Expect a journal article, newspaper article, and some other publications that are recent to come from the original publisher IF the publication is available on the web. Look at the bottom of such articles for copyright information or permissions to reproduce.

Find more useful techniques as well as the specific questions to ask about what you find plus implications of answers to those questions at [Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask](#).