Relevance

These questions address how well the information matches your specific need.

- Is this information suitable for your level of understanding of the topic (i.e., not too basic or too technical).
- Is the information available in the most appropriate format for your purpose?
- Does the information have the features you need (e.g., charts, graphs, maps, illustrations)?
- Does this source update, substantiate, or add to knowledge in your topic area?
- Do the findings support or refute your original ideas?
- Is the information current enough for your purpose?

To learn more about evaluating and choosing information resources, visit the following websites:

- Evaluating web resources
  (Sonoma State University)
  http://libguides.sonoma.edu/evaluate
- Evaluation Criteria
  (New Mexico State University Library)
  http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html
- Thinking critically about discipline-based world wide web resources
  (UCLA College Library)
  http://www2.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/11605_12008.cfm

JEFFLINE
brought to you by Academic & Instructional Support & Resources (AISR)

http://jeffline.jefferson.edu

aisr
Academic & Instructional Support & Resources
"Helping you turn information into knowledge"

Scott Memorial Library
Thomas Jefferson University
1020 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

rev 03/11

Evaluating Information Resources

Help for choosing, comparing, and critically evaluating information sources in print or online

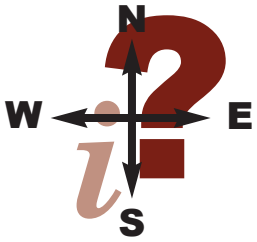
How do you find the best source to meet your information need?

Faced with an ever-increasing volume of information, and the development of new options for publication, it is necessary to apply some standards for evaluating information resources.

Whether printed publications, or documents found on the WWW, the criteria for choosing and evaluating the information should be the same.
These criteria should address:

- Authority
- Content
- Relevance

The following questions to consider are designed to help you evaluate resources and select the best information for your need.



Authority

These questions address the quality and validity of the information:

- What are the author's or producer's qualifications on this topic (i.e., education, experience, occupation, position, affiliation, other publications)?
- What is the reputation of the publisher, producer or distributor? (Is it a university, an alternative press or a private/political organization?)
- Was the material reviewed, peer-reviewed, or edited for publication?
- Does the source reflect political or cultural biases?
- Do other experts in the field agree on the findings presented?
- How current is the information presented?
- Is this information verified in other sources?
- Is a bibliography or other form of documentation included?
- Are the conclusions justified by the information presented?

Content

These questions address the scope, content and organization of the information.

- Is there a stated scope and purpose for the resource?
- Where did the information originate? Is there a specific geographic coverage or orientation?
- When was the information published?
- Who is the intended audience for the information (e.g., students, general public, professionals)?
- Is the resource organized in a logical manner and does it employ devices such as a table of contents or an index?

For websites:

- Is the content original, or does it consist mainly of links to other web resources?
- When was the content last updated?
- Can the site be easily searched or browsed?