

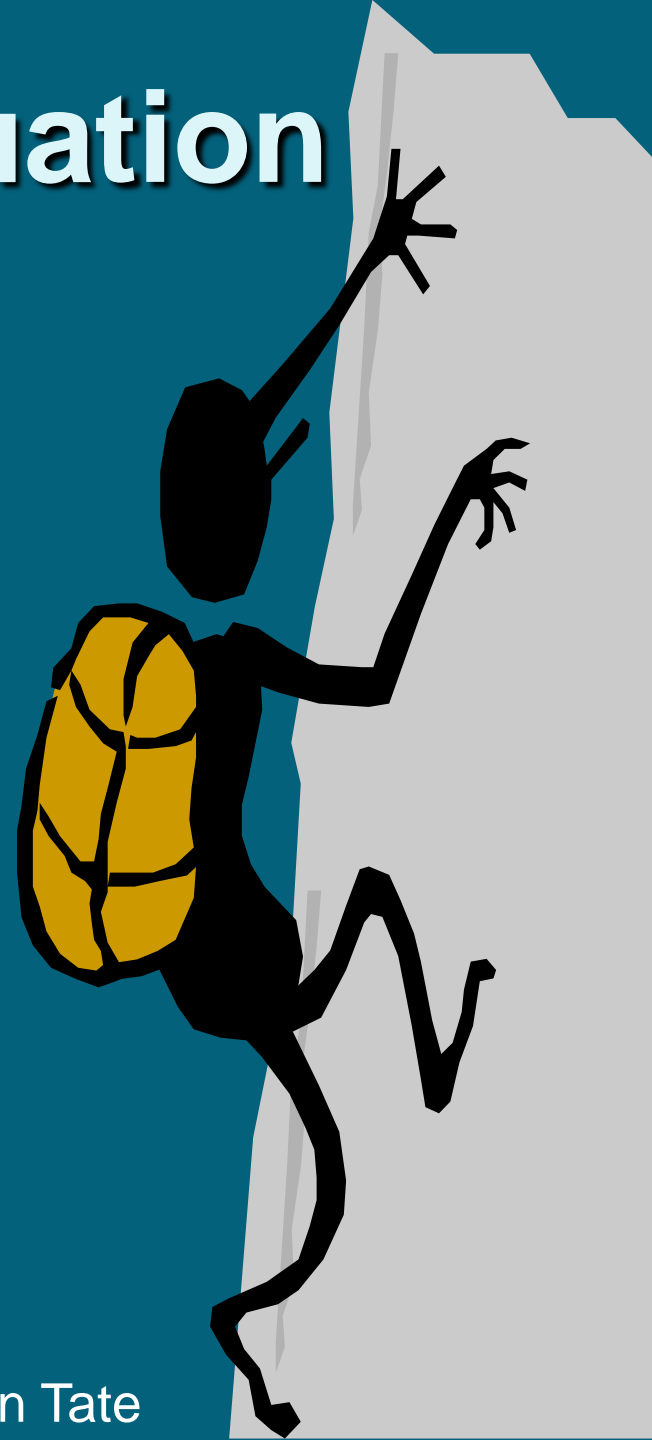
# Web Resource Evaluation Techniques

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**University Park, PA**




# Additional Web Evaluation Materials


**Materials to accompany this  
presentation are available at**

**[http://www.mtateresearch.com/web\\_wisdom\\_home](http://www.mtateresearch.com/web_wisdom_home)**

# Topics Covered

- ▶ **The Importance of Web Evaluation**
  - ▶ **Review of Five Traditional Evaluation Criteria**
  - ▶ **Adaptation of the Traditional Evaluation Criteria to Web Resources**
  - ▶ **Additional Challenges Posed by Web Resources and How to Cope with Them**
- 

# Reliance Upon Web-based Information Increasing

- **Quality of Web resources varies tremendously**
  - **Criteria needed to evaluate Web resources**
    - **Some traditional evaluation criteria still useful**
    - **New criteria also needed**
- 

# Five Traditional Evaluation Criteria

1. **Accuracy**
2. **Authority**
3. **Objectivity**
4. **Currency**
5. **Coverage**




# Criterion #1: *Accuracy*

How **reliable** and free from error is the information?

Are there **editors** and fact checkers?



# Accuracy of Web Resources

- **Almost anyone** can publish on the Web
  - Many Web resources **not verified** by editors and/or fact checkers
  - Web standards to ensure accuracy not fully developed
- 

# Criterion #2

## *Authority*

What are the author's **qualifications** for writing on the subject?



How **reputable** is the publisher?



# Authority of Web Resources

- **Often difficult to determine authorship of Web resources**
- **If author's name listed, his/her qualifications frequently absent**
- **Publisher responsibility often not indicated**



# Criterion #3

## *Objectivity*

- Is the information presented with a **minimum of bias**?
- To what extent is the information trying to **sway the opinion** of the audience?

# Objectivity of Web Resources

Web often functions as a  
“virtual soapbox”

Goals/aims of persons or  
groups presenting  
material often  
not clearly stated

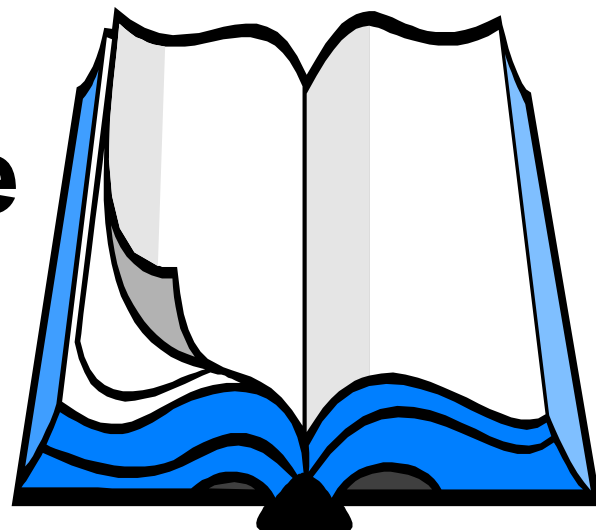


# Criterion #4


## *Currency*

**Is the content of the work  
up-to-date?**

**Is the publication date  
clearly indicated?**



# Currency of Web Resources

- **Dates not always included on Web pages**
  - **If included, a date may have various meanings:**
    - **Date first created**
    - **Date placed on Web**
    - **Date last revised**
- 

# Criterion #5

## *Coverage*

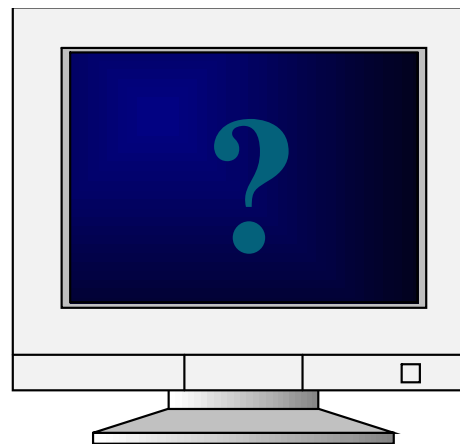
- **What topics** are included in the work?
- To what **depth** are topics explored?

# Coverage of Web Resources

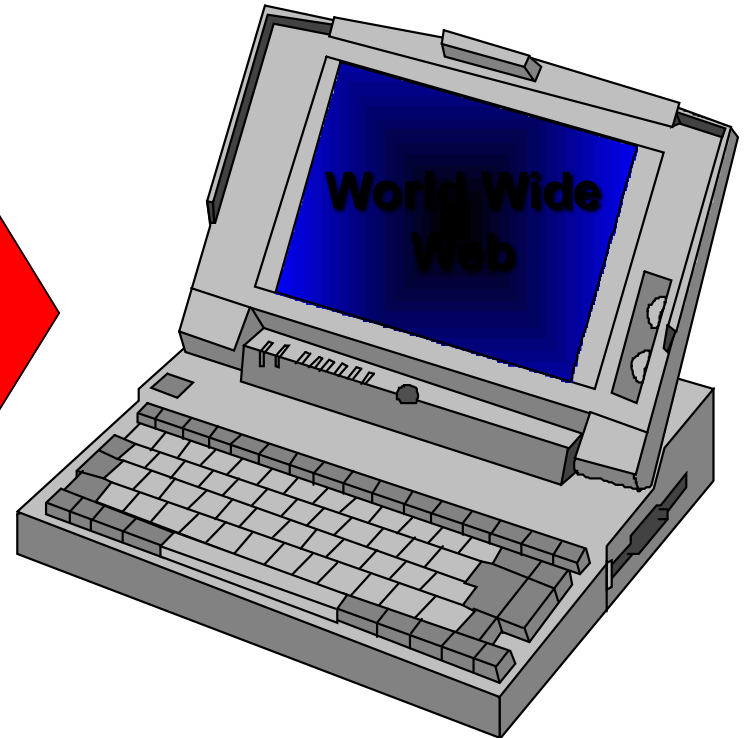
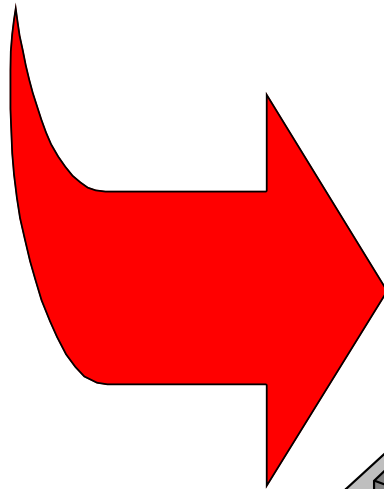
- **Web coverage may differ from print or other media coverage**
- **Often hard to determine extent of Web coverage**



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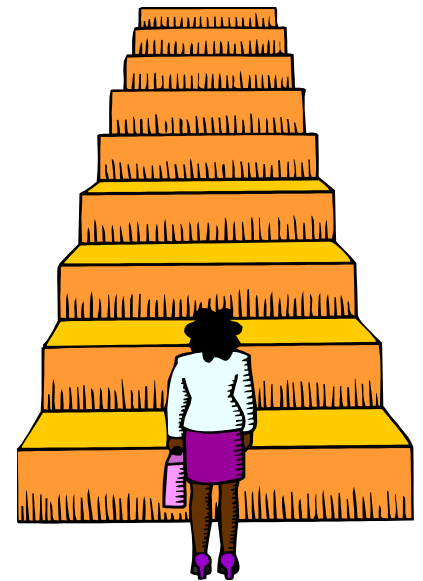
# Use These Criteria to Evaluate Actual Web Pages





# But Also Remember...

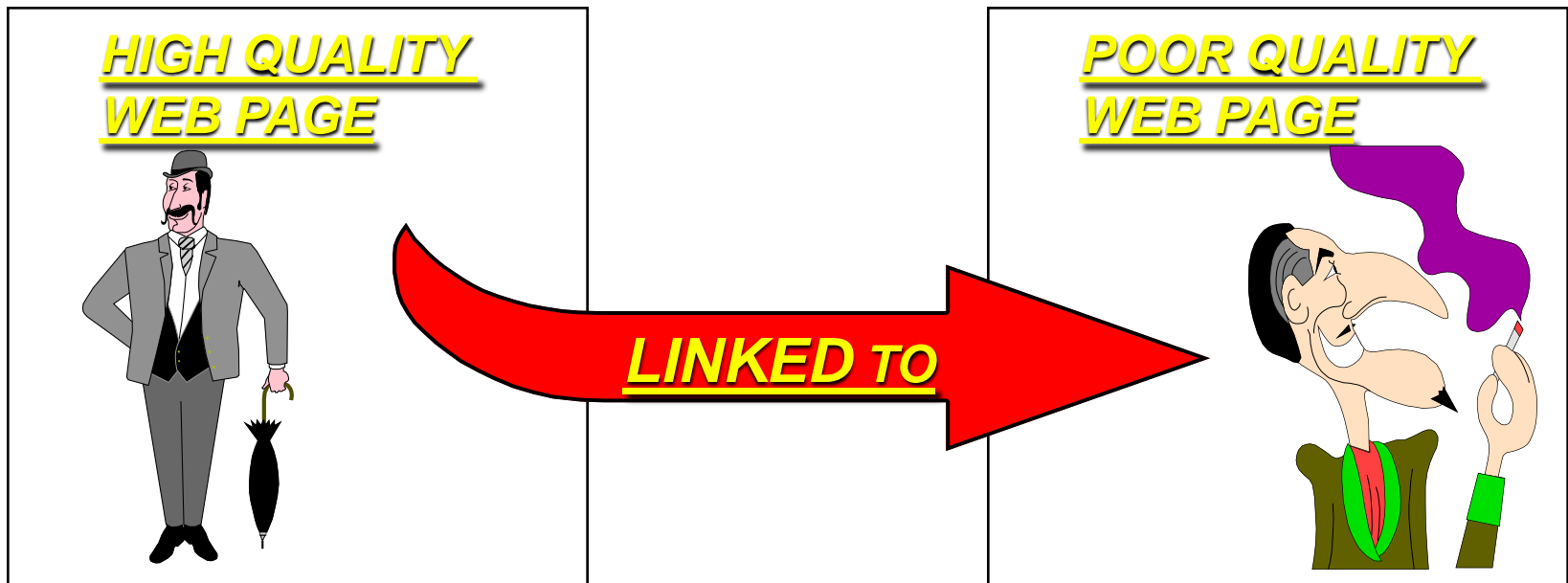
*The Web Presents  
Additional Evaluation  
Challenges*



# Challenge

## *Use of Hypertext Links*

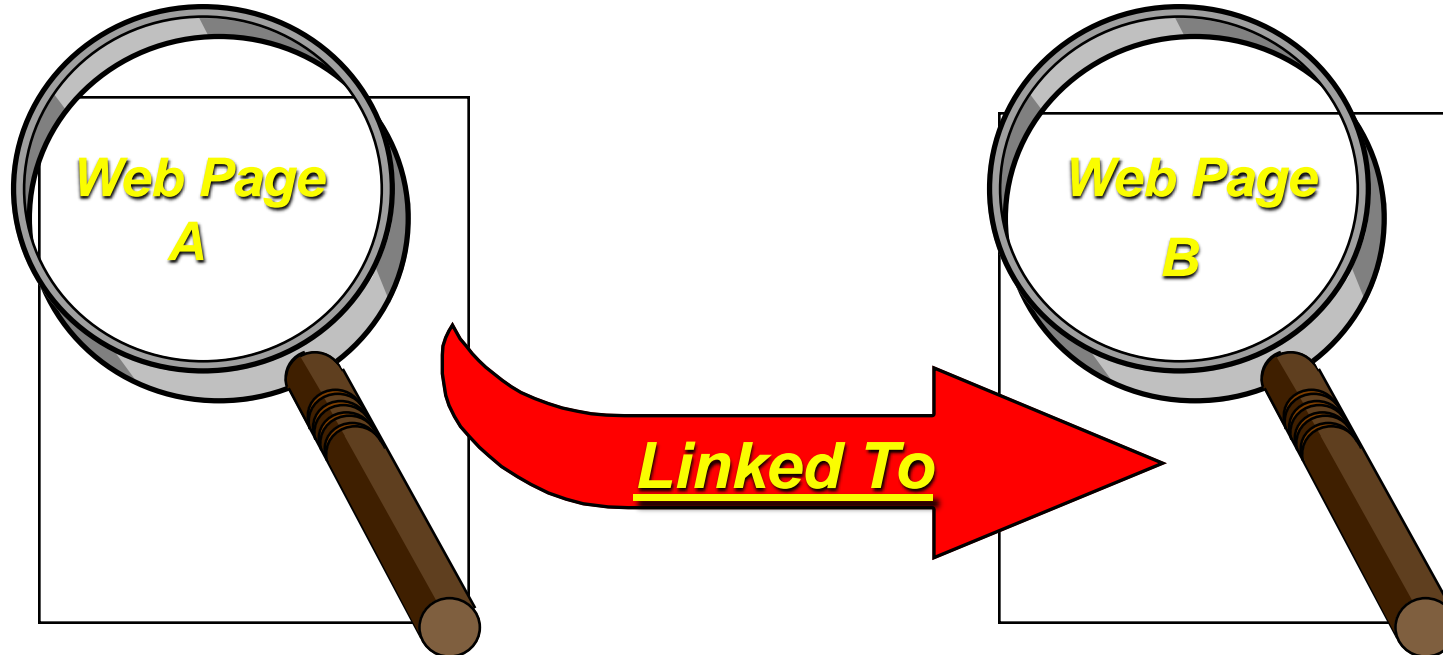
Quality of Web pages linked to original Web page may vary



# Coping Strategy

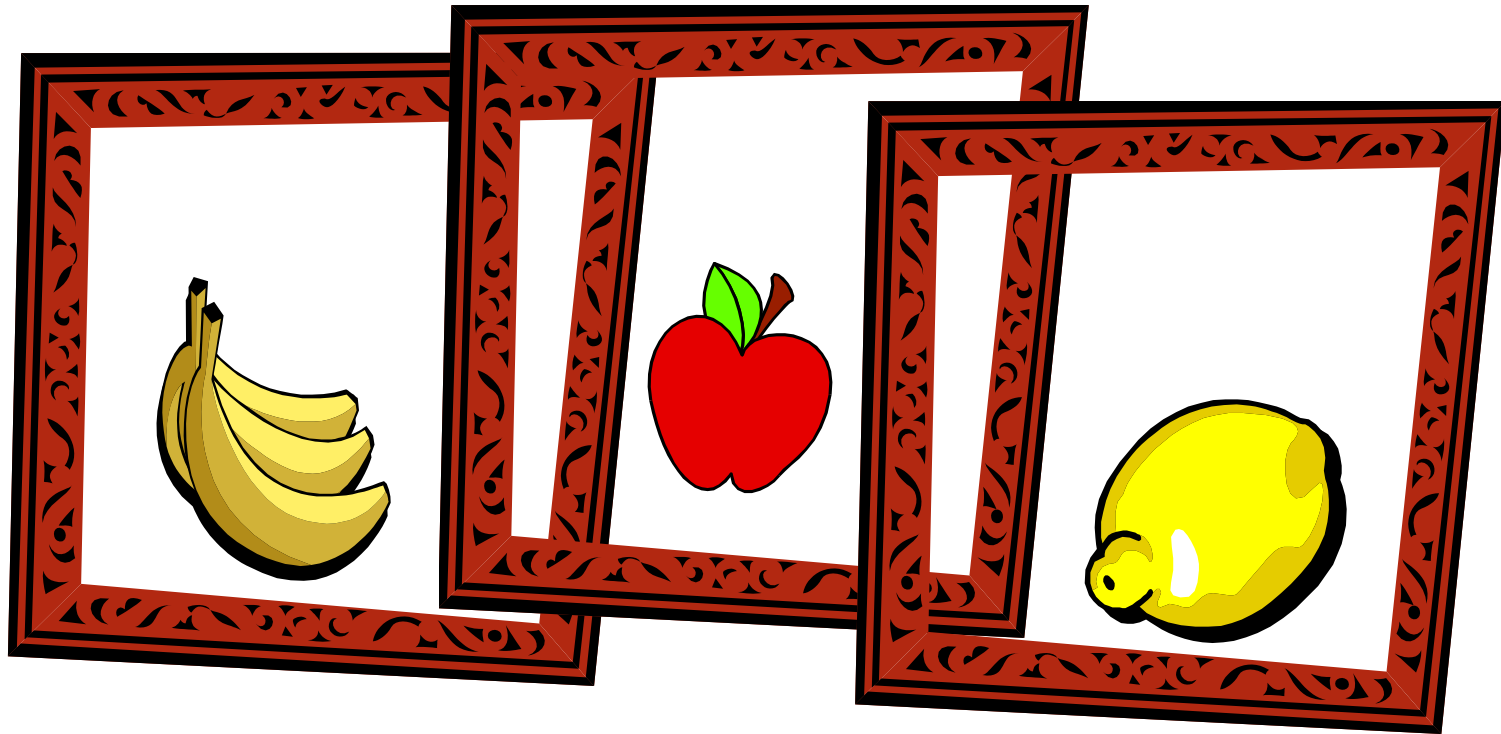
## *Use of Hypertext Links*

**Evaluate each Web page independently**



# Challenge

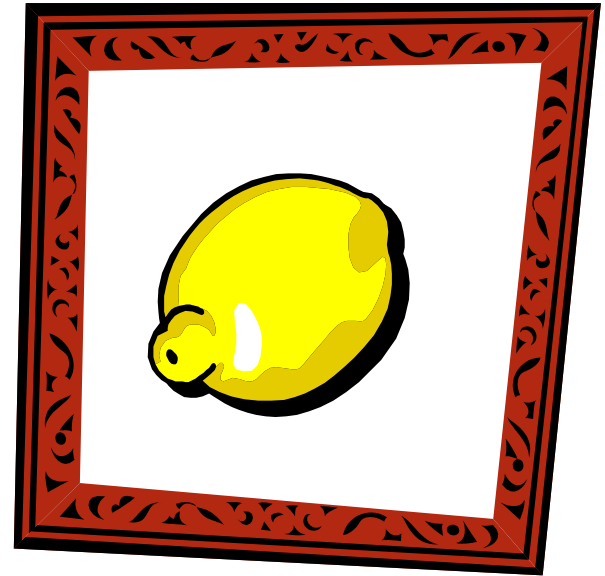
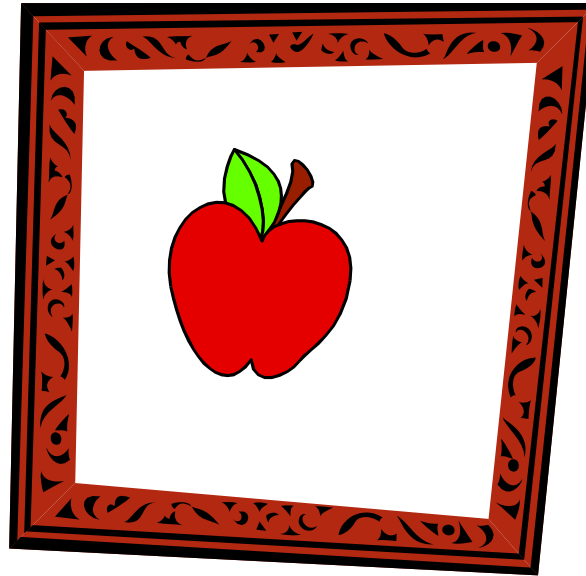
## *Use of Frames*



**Each Frame Displays a Separate Web Page**

# Coping Strategy

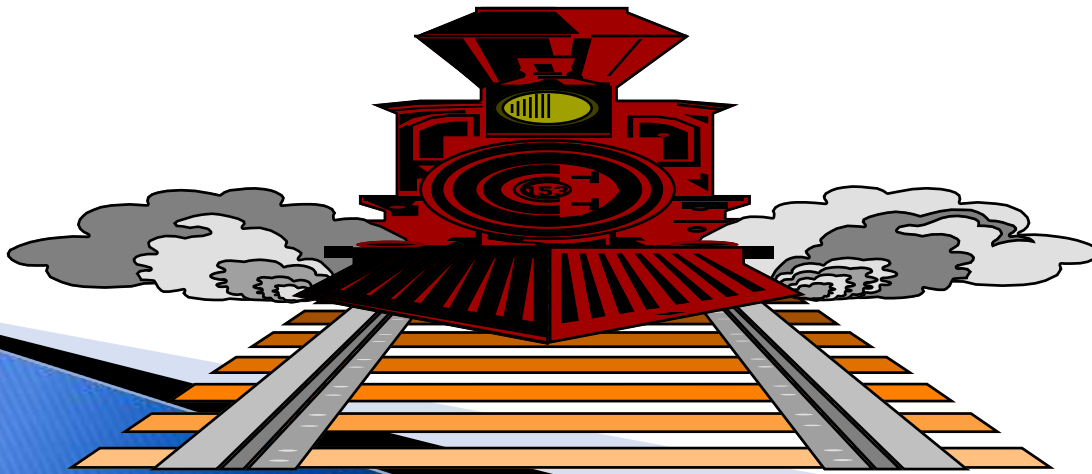
## *Use of Frames*



**Evaluate *Each Frame* Independently**

# Challenge

*Search Engines Can  
Retrieve Web Pages Out  
of Context*



# Coping Strategy

## *Search Engines Can Retrieve Web Pages Out of Context*

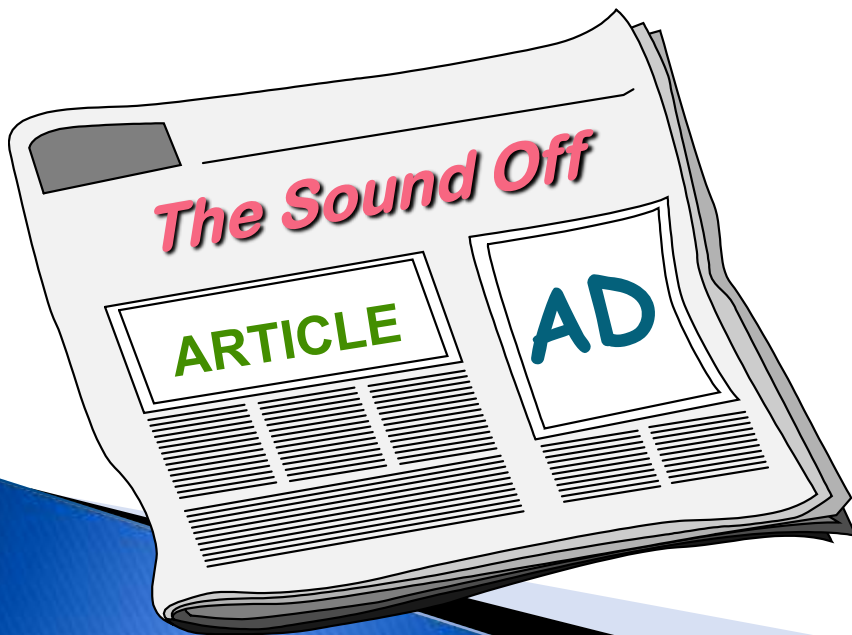
Always try to return to the *“home page”* to determine source of information



# Challenge

## *Marketing-Oriented Web Pages*

In other media, there usually are clear **visual and/or audio** distinctions between advertising and information



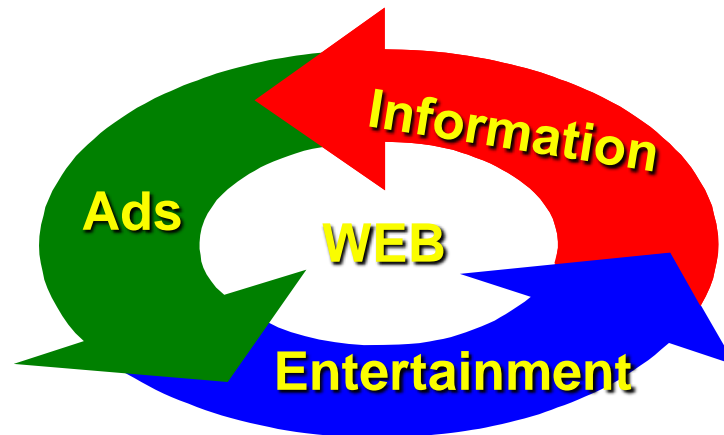
**And Now a Word  
From Our Sponsors**



# Challenge

## *Marketing-Oriented Web Pages*

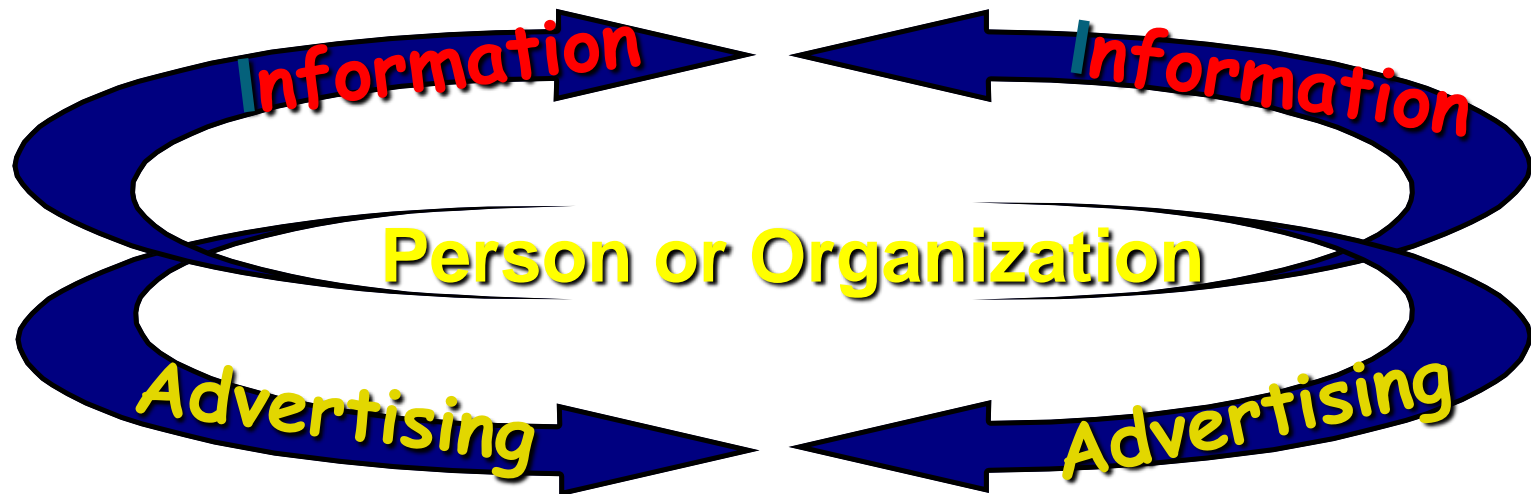
**On the Web, distinctions between advertising and information can become extremely blurred**



# Coping Strategy

## *Marketing-Oriented Web Pages*

Try to determine if advertising and informational content are supplied by the *same* person or organization

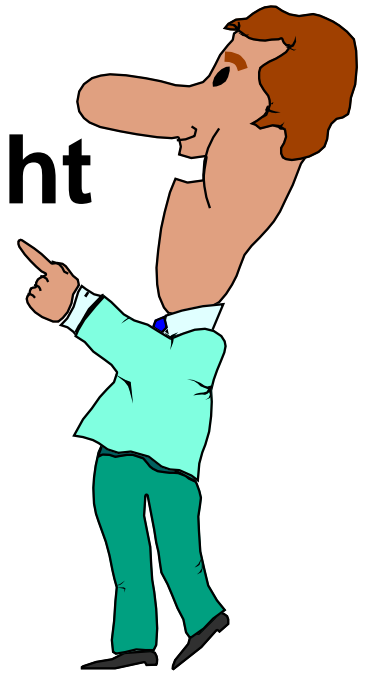


# Challenge:

## *Blending of Entertainment, Information, and Advertising*



The Web has brought  
*“infomercial”*  
concept to new  
heights



# Coping Strategy:

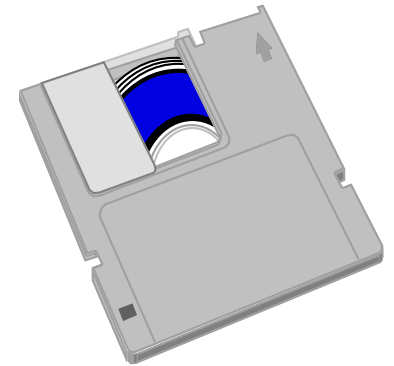
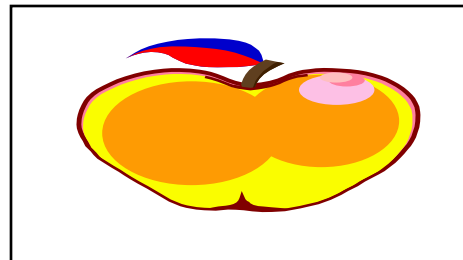
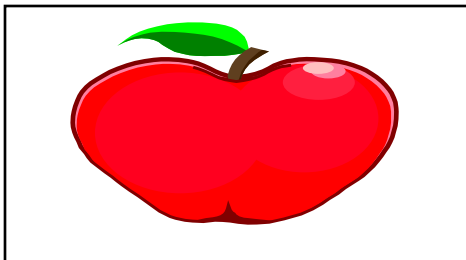
*Blending of Entertainment,  
Information, and Advertising*



# Challenge

## *Software Requirements May Limit Access to Information*

- ▶ Full access may require additional software
- ▶ Browsers may alter the appearance of Web Pages



# Coping Strategy:

## *Software Requirements May Limit Access to Information*

Be aware that software limitations may:

- Alter how much information is obtainable
- Alter the appearance of information obtained

# Challenge

## *Instability of Web Pages*



**Web Pages May  
Move or Disappear  
Without Notice**

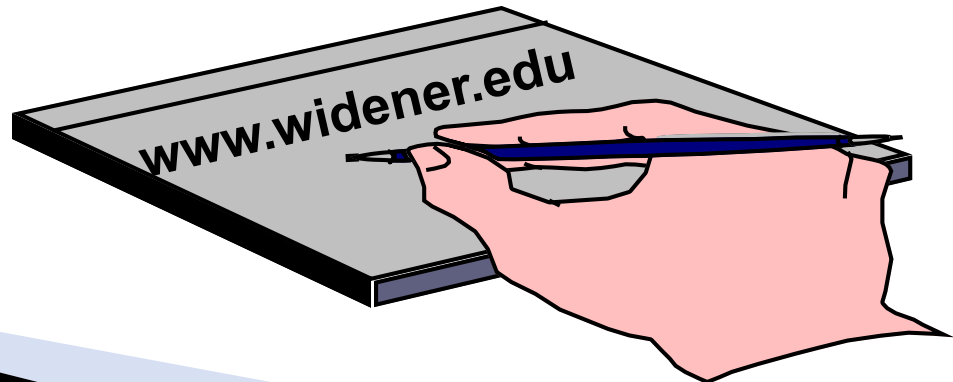
User may not  
be able to refer  
back to a Web page

# Coping Strategy

## *Instability of Web Pages*



- Try to determine the stability of your source
- Document source to the fullest extent possible

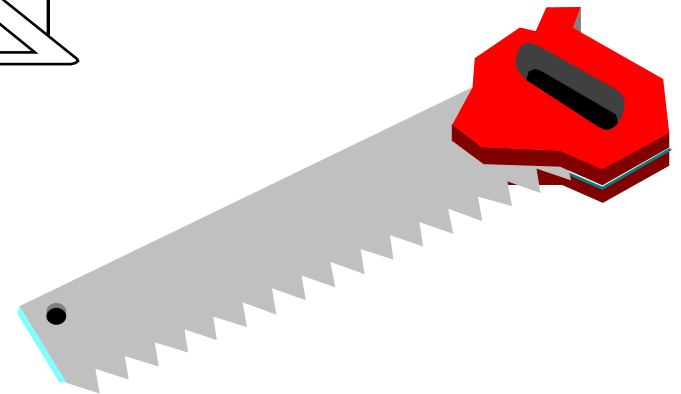
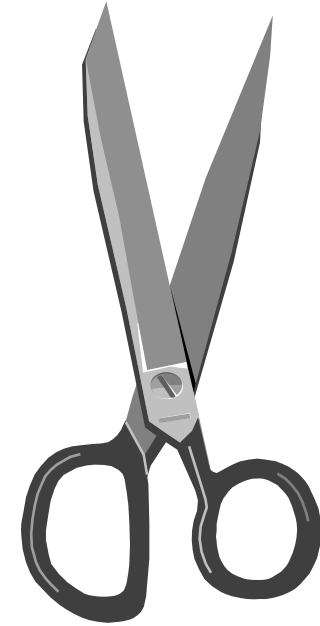
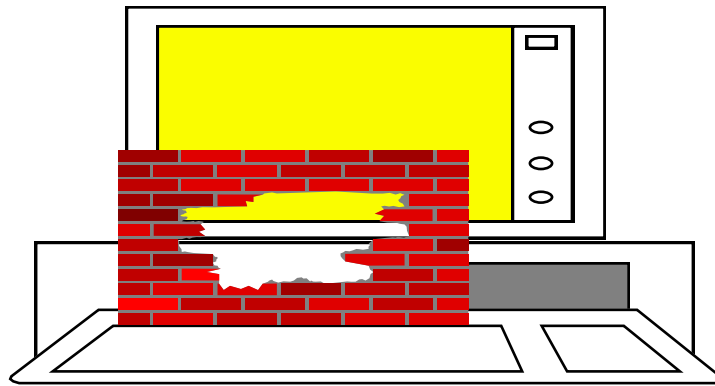
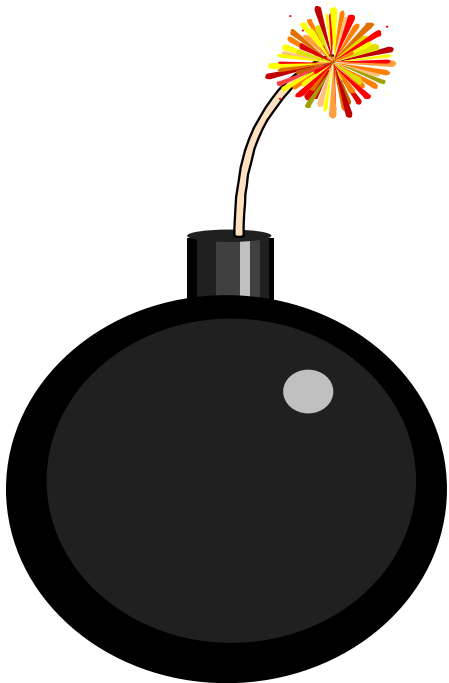




# Challenge

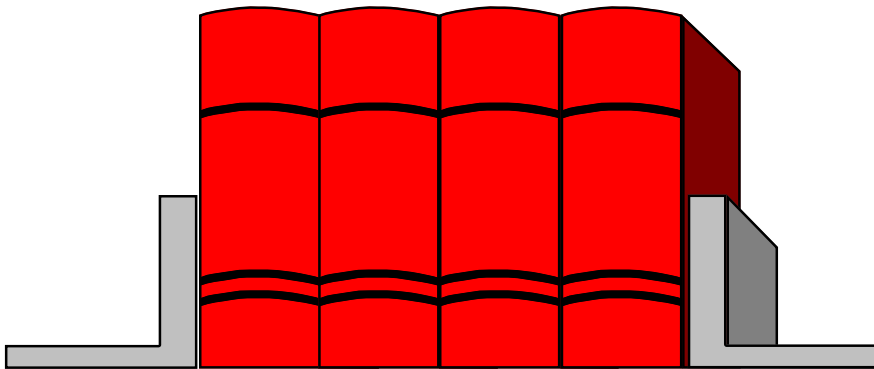
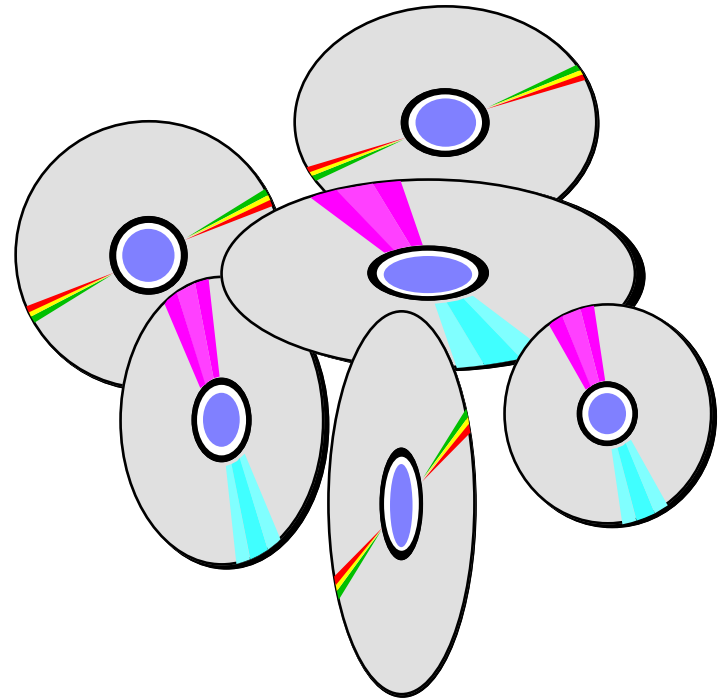
## *Web Pages Susceptible to Alteration*

- ▶ Accidental alteration
- ▶ Deliberate alteration



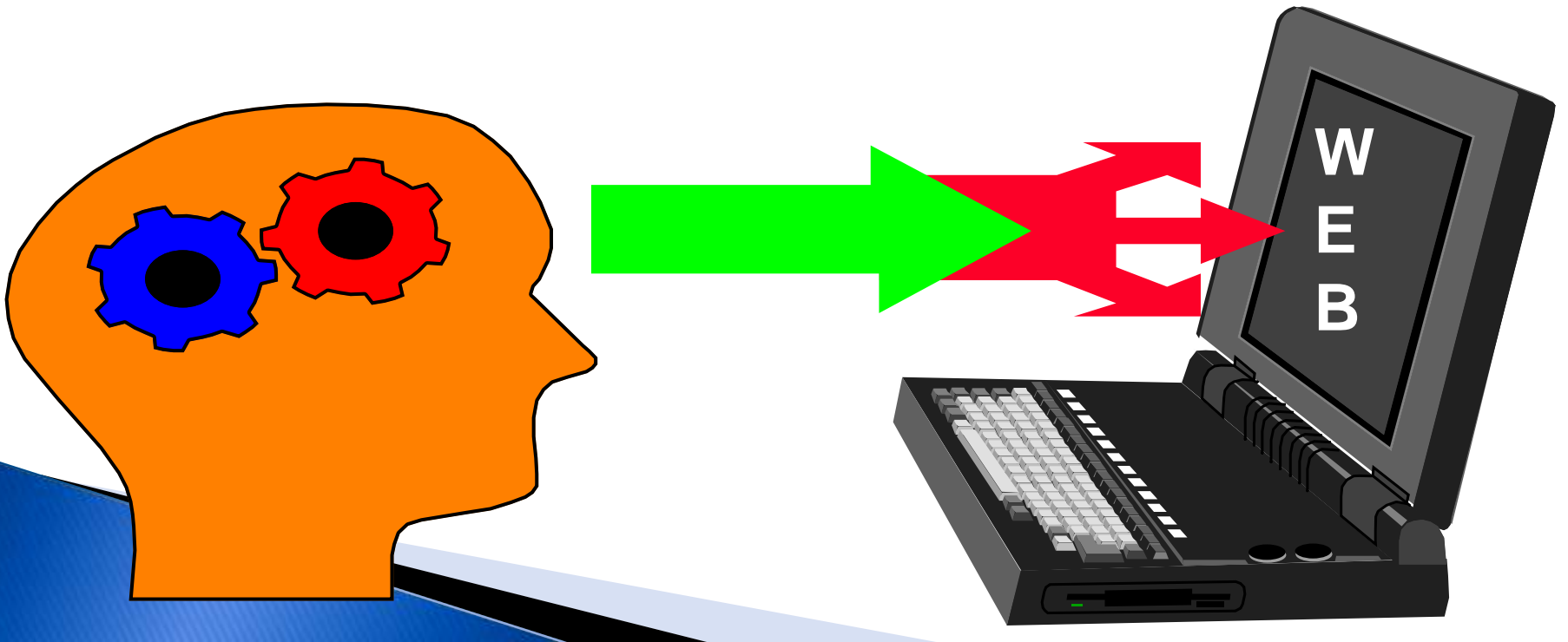
# Coping Strategy

## *Web Pages Susceptible to Alteration*



# ***ULTIMATE CHALLENGE***

**Applying This Knowledge When  
Using the Web as a Research Tool**



# Web Page Evaluation Procedure

**Step 1: Identify type of page**

**Step 2: Use appropriate checklist**

**Step 3: Based on checklist criteria, determine relative quality of page**



# Web Page Evaluation Procedure

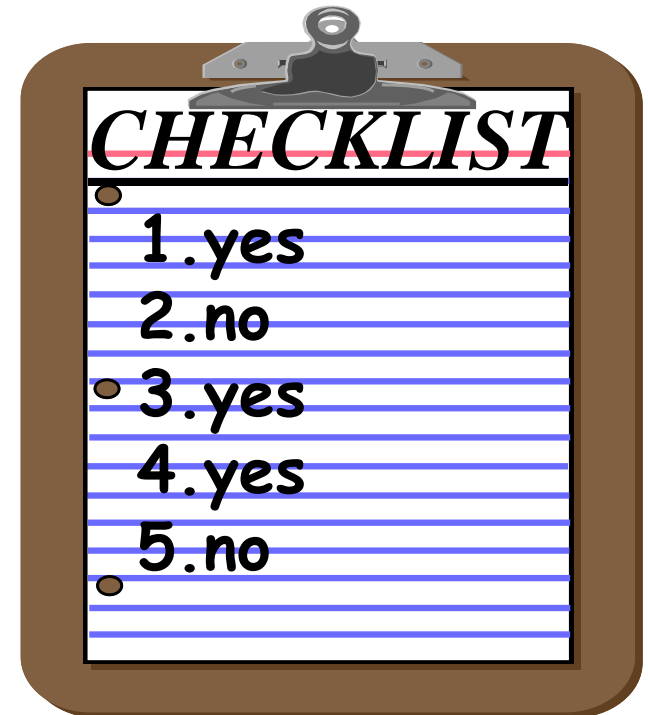
## Step 1: Identify the Type of Web Page

- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Business/Marketing
- ▶ Informational
- ▶ News
- ▶ Personal
- ▶ Entertainment



# Web Page Evaluation Procedure

## Step 2: Use the Appropriate Checklist



# Web Page Evaluation Procedure

**Step 3: Based on the checklist criteria, determine the relative quality of the Web page**

The greater number of checklist questions answered “yes”, the more likely the page is of higher informational quality.

# Conclusion

- ▶ **Web evaluation techniques are in development**
  - ▶ **Technology is outpacing ability to create standards and guidelines**
  - ▶ **Establishing evaluation procedures will be an ongoing evolutionary process**
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