

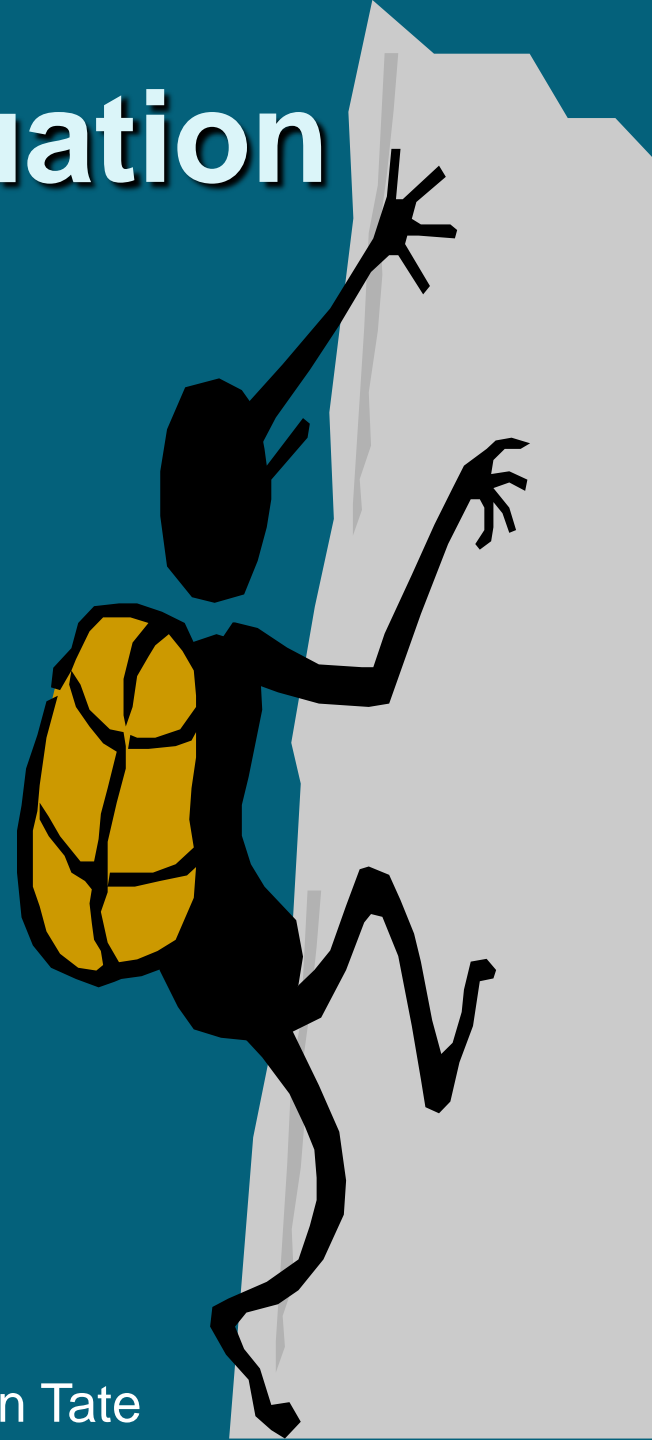
Web Resource Evaluation Techniques

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Additional Web Evaluation Materials


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

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

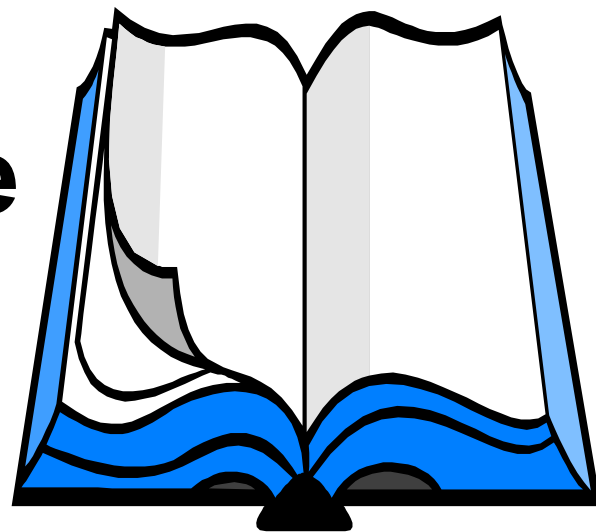


Criterion #4


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

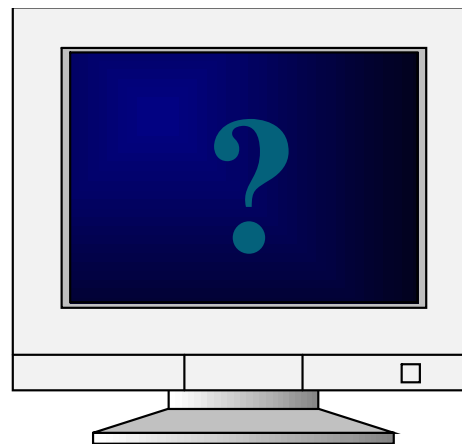
- **What topics** are included in the work?
 - To what **depth** are topics explored?
- 

Coverage of Web Resources

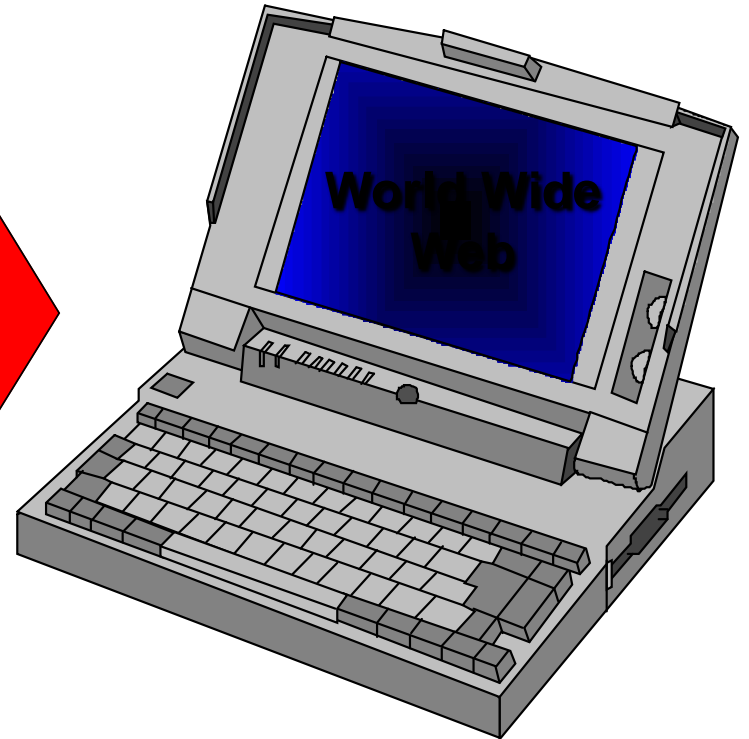
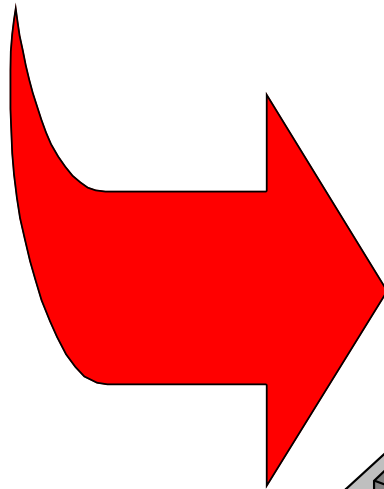
- **Web coverage may differ from print or other media coverage**
- **Often hard to determine extent of Web coverage**



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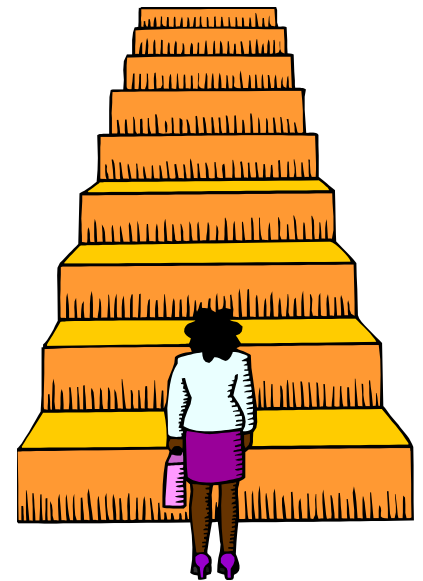


Use These Criteria to Evaluate Actual Web Pages



But Also Remember...

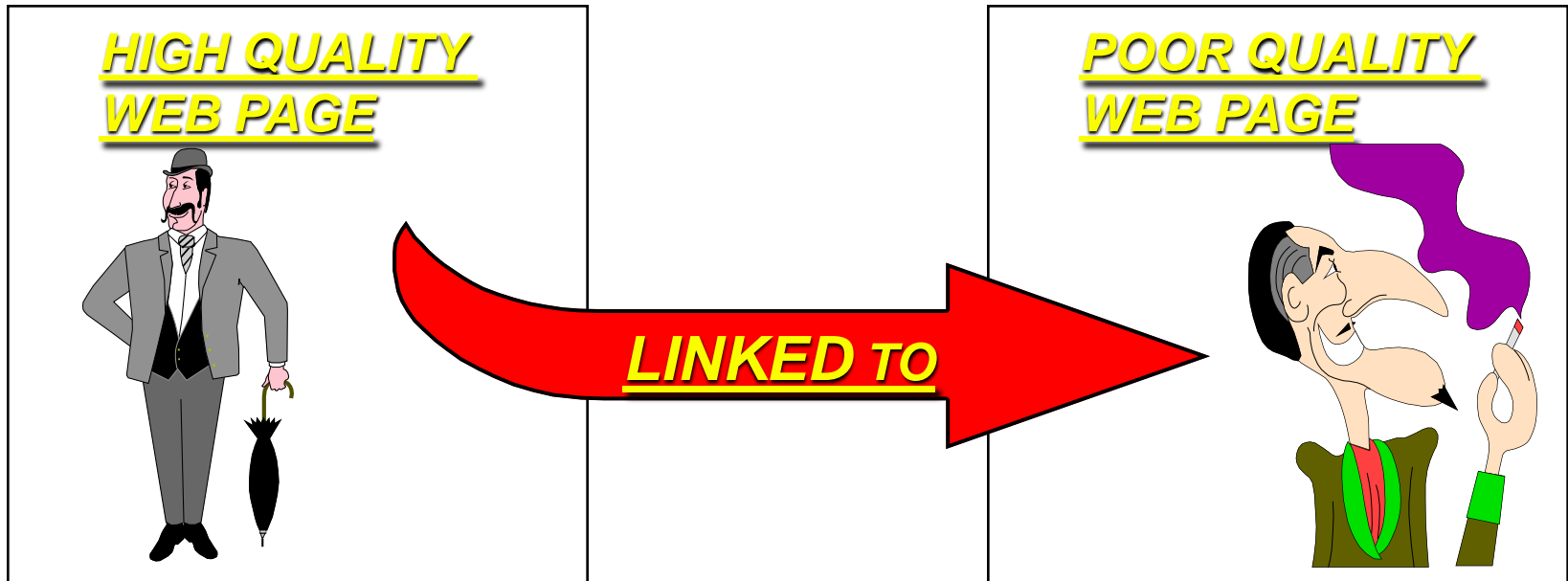
*The Web Presents
Additional Evaluation
Challenges*



Challenge

Use of Hypertext Links

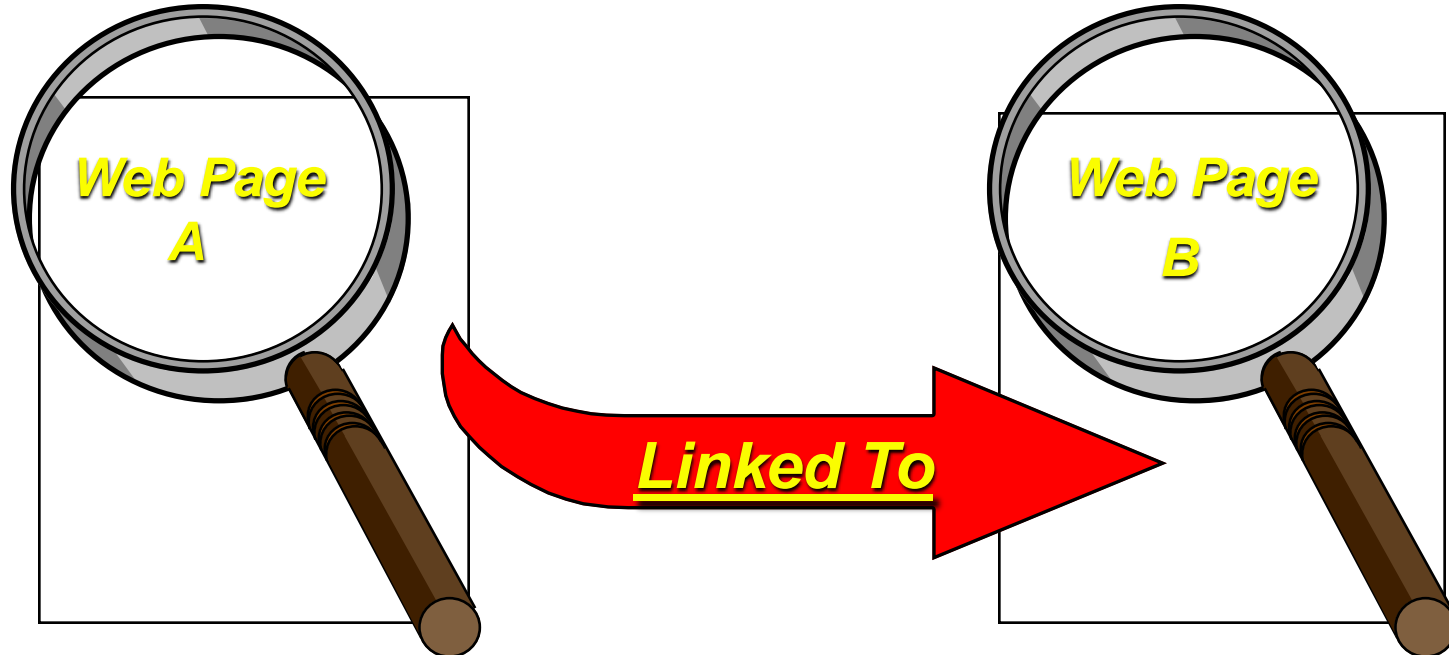
Quality of Web pages linked to original Web page may vary



Coping Strategy

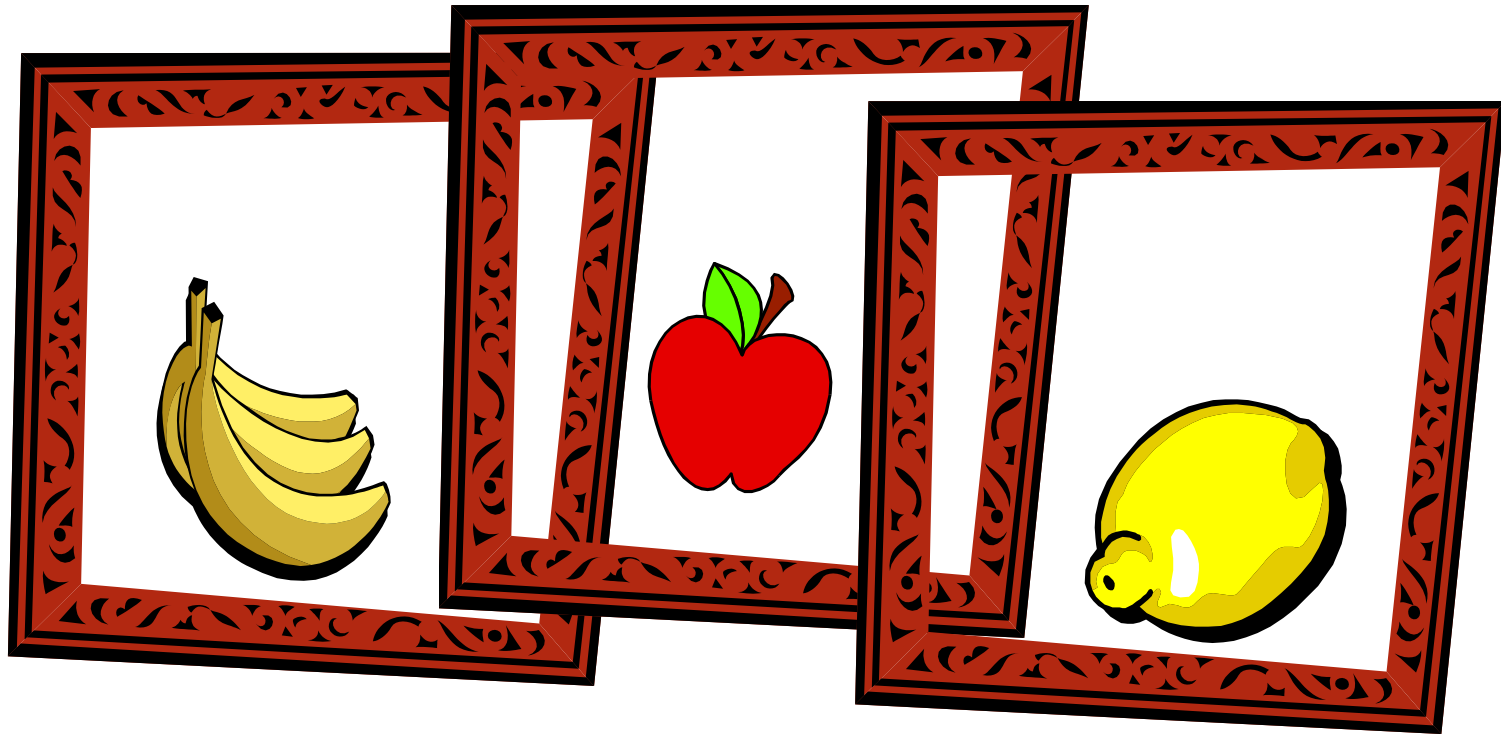
Use of Hypertext Links

Evaluate each Web page independently



Challenge

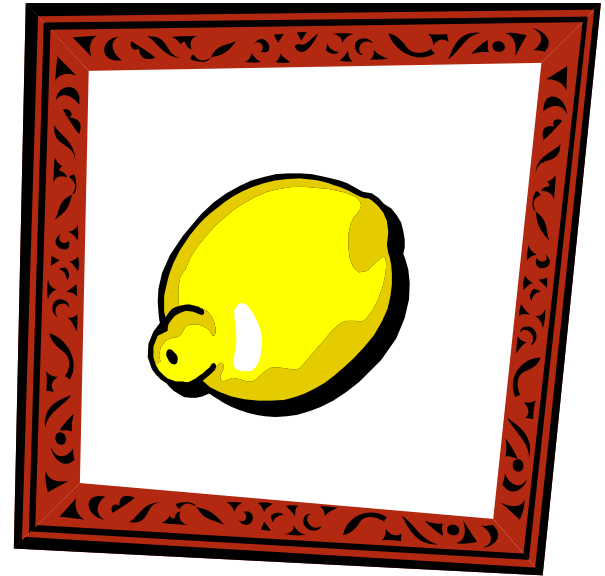
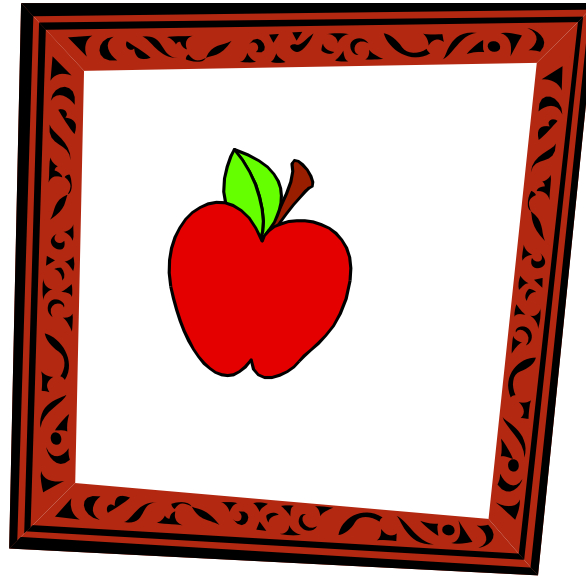
Use of Frames



Each Frame Displays a Separate Web Page

Coping Strategy

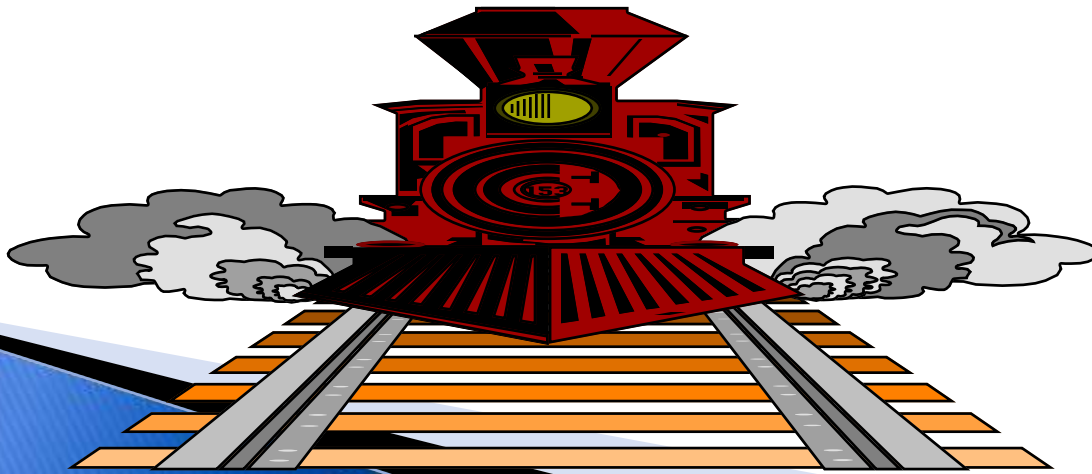
Use of Frames



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

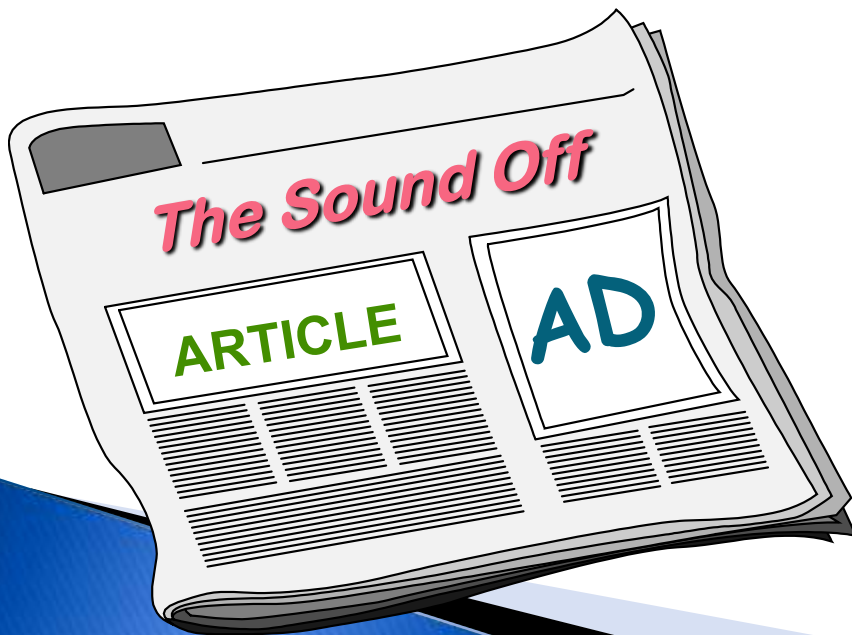
Always try to return to the *“home page”* to determine source of information



Challenge

Marketing-Oriented Web Pages

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

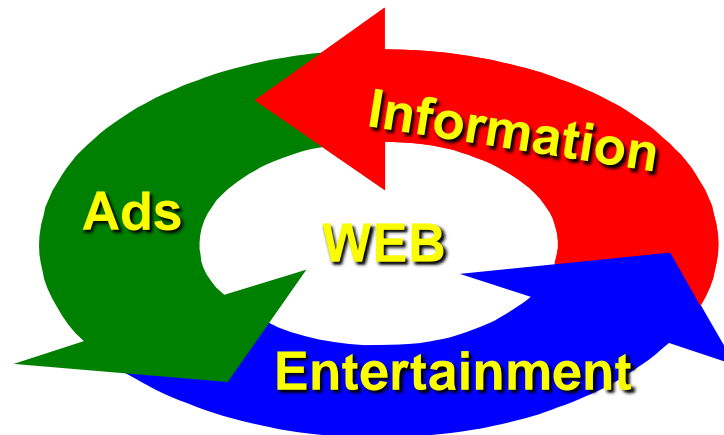


And Now a Word
From Our Sponsors

Challenge

Marketing-Oriented Web Pages

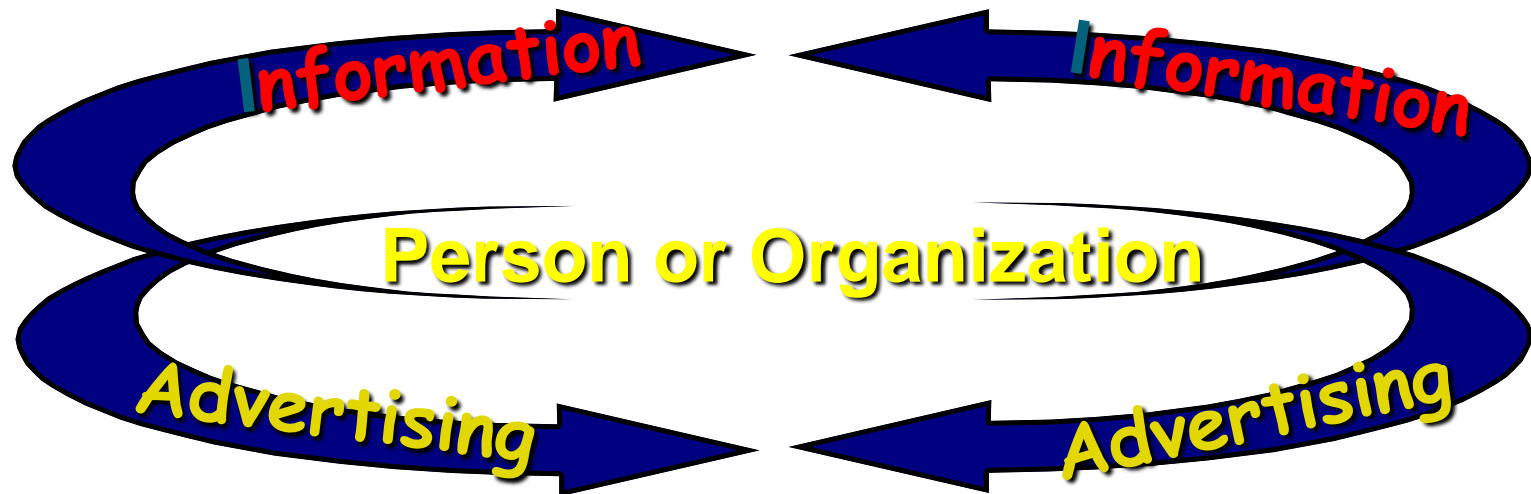
On the Web, distinctions between advertising and information can become extremely blurred



Coping Strategy

Marketing-Oriented Web Pages

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

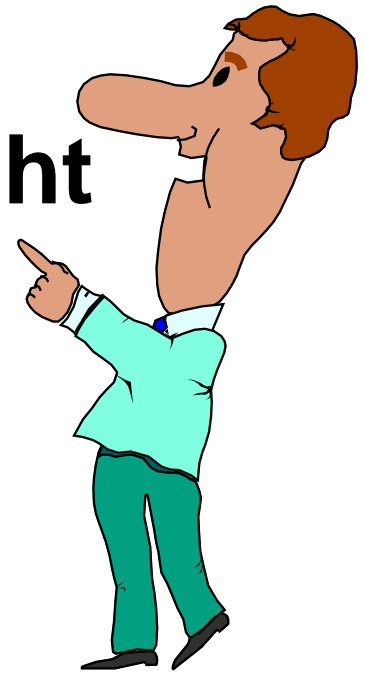


Challenge:

Blending of Entertainment, Information, and Advertising



The Web has brought
“infomercial”
concept to new
heights



Coping Strategy:

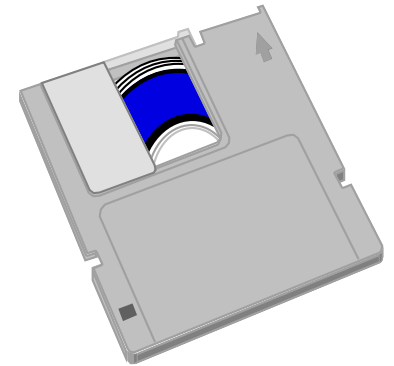
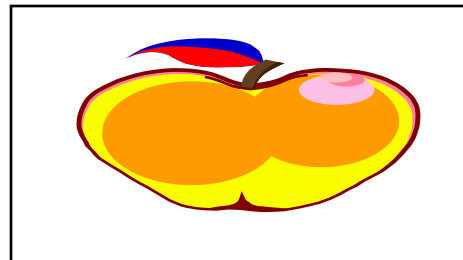
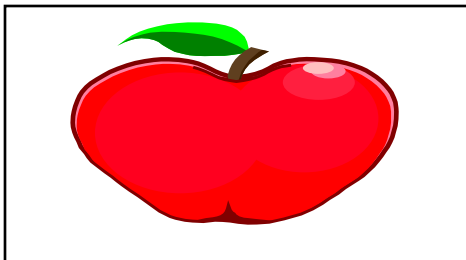
*Blending of Entertainment,
Information, and Advertising*



Challenge

Software Requirements May Limit Access to Information

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



Coping Strategy:

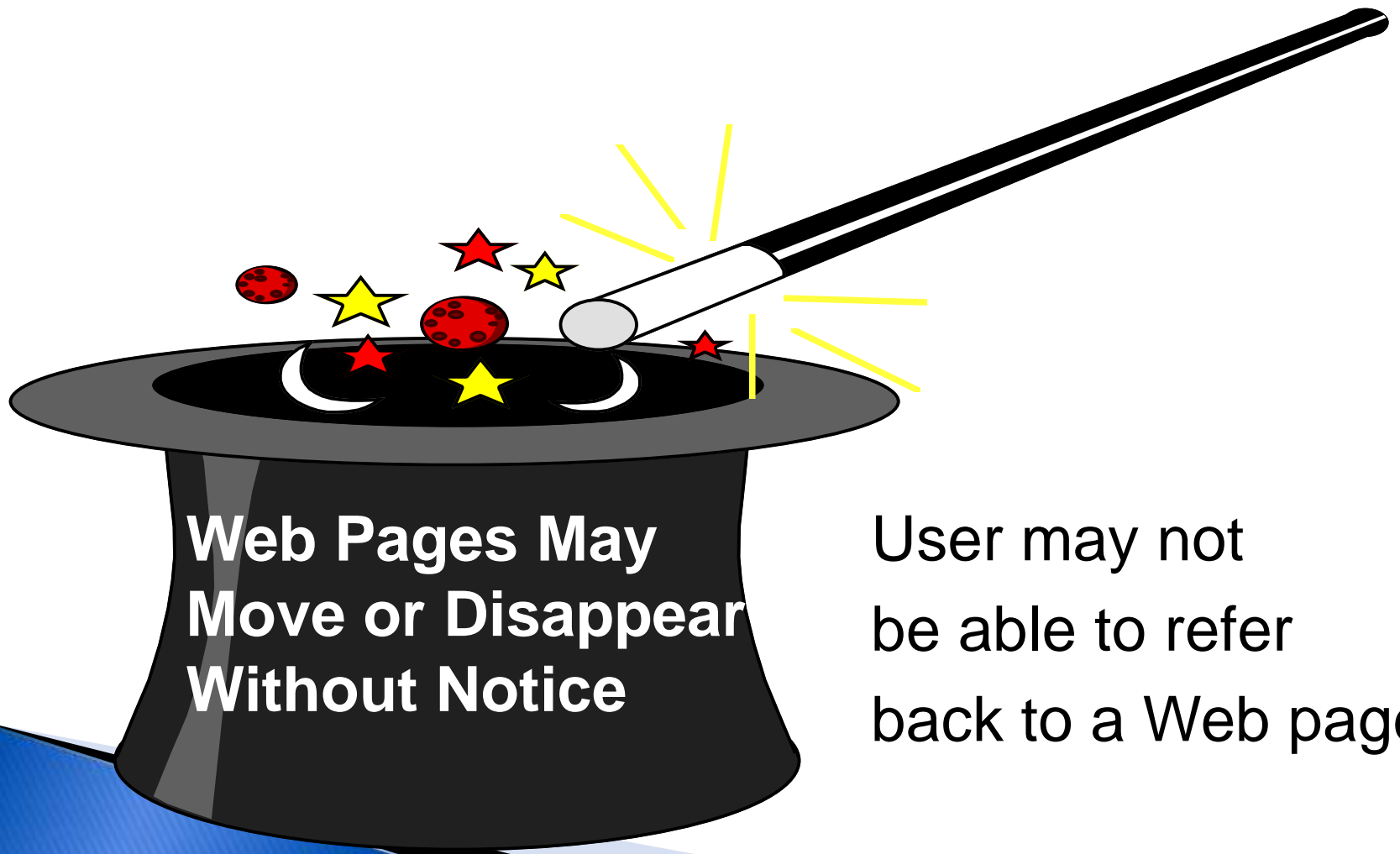
Software Requirements May Limit Access to Information

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**

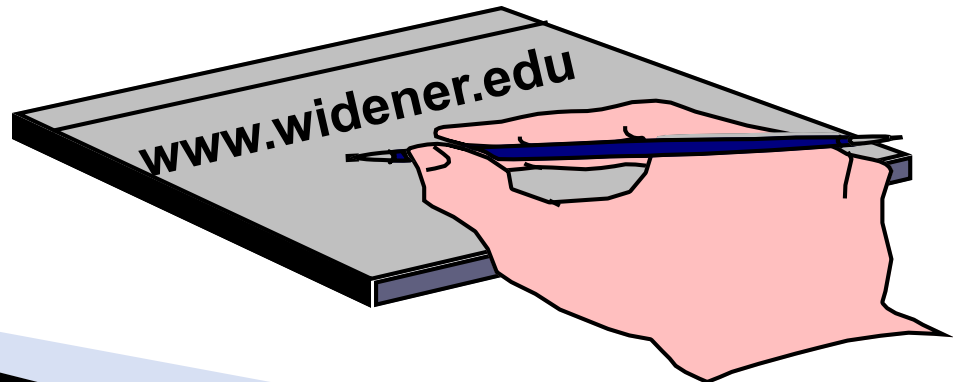
User may not
be able to refer
back to a Web page

Coping Strategy

Instability of Web Pages



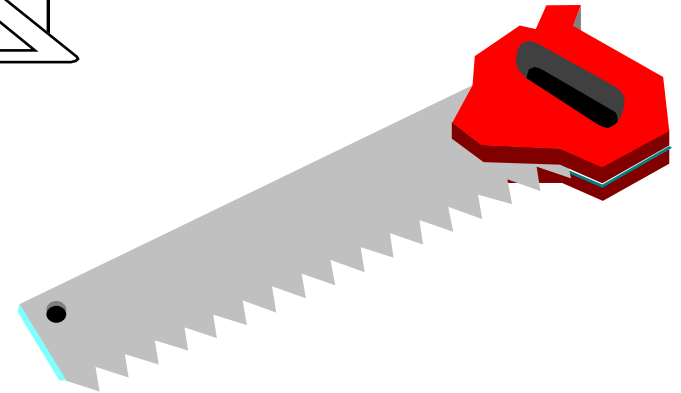
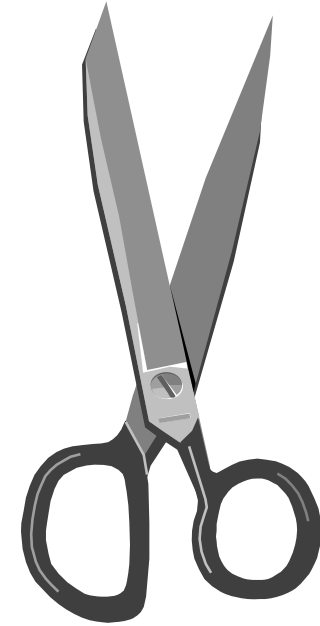
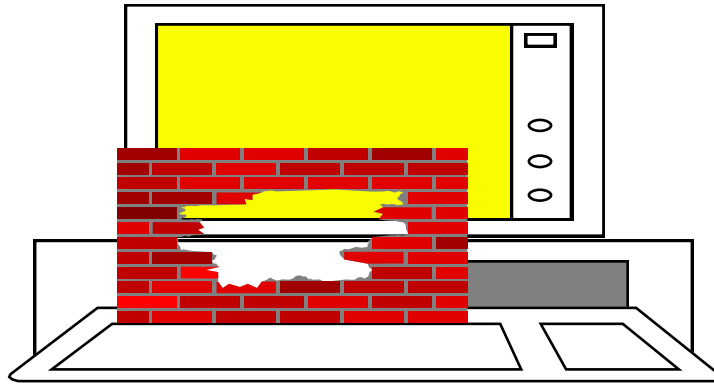
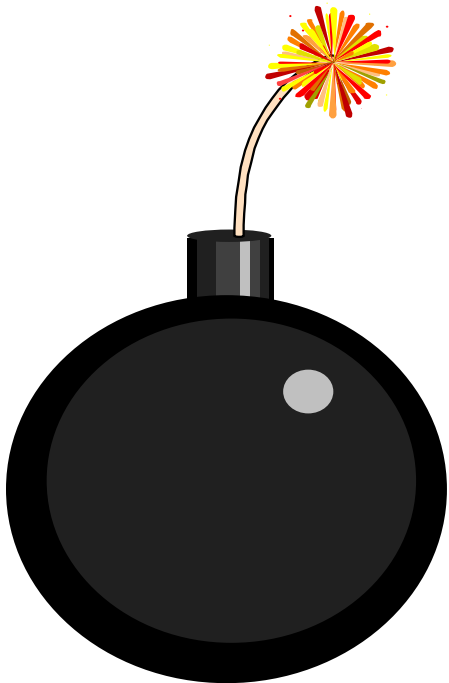
- Try to determine the stability of your source
- Document source to the fullest extent possible



Challenge

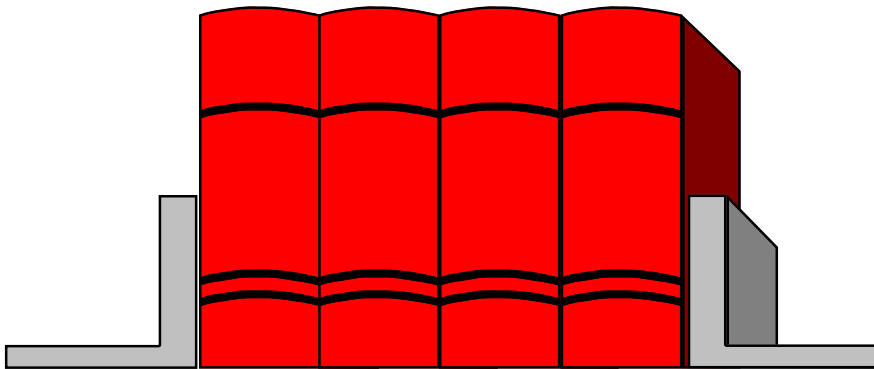
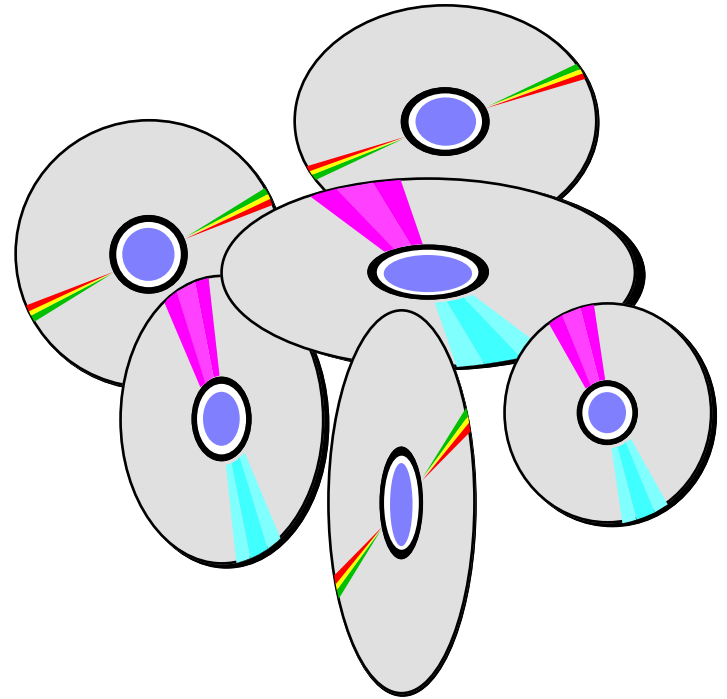
Web Pages Susceptible to Alteration

- ▶ Accidental alteration
- ▶ Deliberate alteration



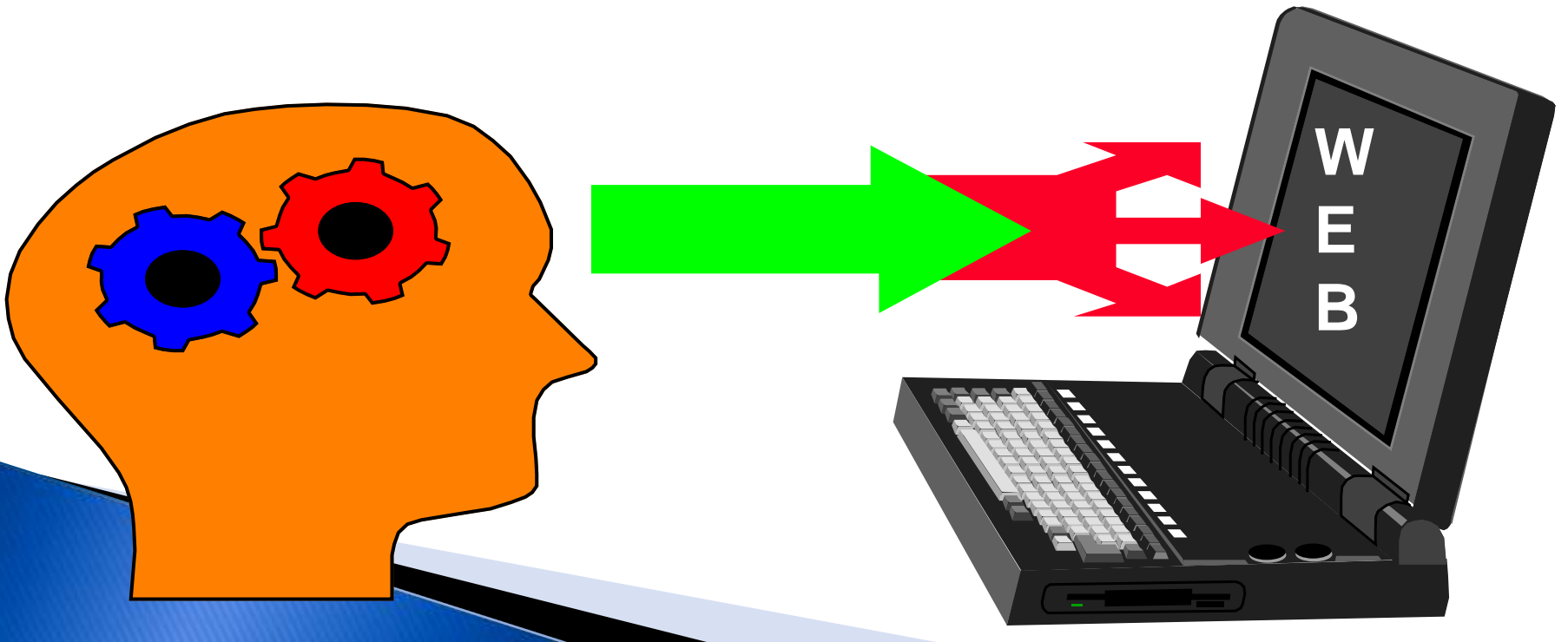
Coping Strategy

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**
- 