

Checklist for an Advocacy Web Page

How to Recognize an Advocacy Web Page

An **Advocacy Web Page** is one sponsored by a group or organization attempting to influence public opinion (i.e., one that is trying to sell ideas). The URL address of the page frequently ends in **.org** (organization).

Questions to Ask about the Web Page

Note: The greater the number of questions listed below answered "yes," the more likely it is you can determine whether the source is of high information quality.

Criterion #1: AUTHORITY

- Is it clear what organization is responsible for the contents of the page?
- Is there a link to a page describing the goals of the organization?
- Is there a way of verifying the legitimacy of this organization? That is, is there a phone number or postal address to contact for more information? (Simply an email address is not enough).
- Is there a statement that the content of the page has the official approval of the organization?
- Is it clear whether this is a page from the national or local chapter of the organization?
- Is there a statement giving the organization's name as copyright holder?

Criterion #2: ACCURACY

- Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified in another source? (If not, the page may still offer insights about the organization's views on issues; however, it would not be useful as a source of factual information).
- Is the information free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors? These kinds of errors not only indicate a lack of quality control, but can actually produce inaccuracies in information.

Criterion #3: OBJECTIVITY

- Are the organization's biases clearly stated?
- If there is any advertising on the page, is it clearly differentiated from the informational content?

Criterion #4: CURRENCY

- Are there dates on the page to indicate:
 - When the page was written?
 - When the page was first placed on the Web?
 - When the page was last revised?
- Are there any other indications that the material is regularly updated?

Criterion #5: COVERAGE

- Is there an indication that the page has been completed, and is not still under construction?
- Is it clear what topics the page intends to address?
- Does the page succeed in addressing these topics, or has something significant been left out?
- Is the point of view of the organization presented in a clear and concise manner with its arguments well supported?