Criteria for Evaluating web pages

- **Accuracy**
  - It is important to know the accuracy of the information.
  - Look at the following:
    - A sloppy page (bad grammar, misspelling) indicates hastiness.
    - It’s always a good idea to cross-reference information, no matter where you find it.
    - Do graphic add or subtract from the content?
    - Is the information complete or fragmented?

- **Authority**
  - It is important to know where the information is coming from and by whom it was written.
  - Look at the following:
    - Who is the author of this page or information?
    - What are his credentials? Eg. Qualification
    - What institution is it affiliated with?
    - Does the page conveniently display the information?
    - Was the information written by a person who is specialist in this field or is it merely someone’s hobby or opinion/
    - Was the content verified, reviewed or peer-reviewed in any way?

- **Currency** (up-to-date)
  - It is important to use only the current information.
  - Currency defines the age of the information. Look at the following:
    - When was this page created?
    - Is there a revision / creation date?
    - Do the links work?
    - Is the page maintained and new material added?

- **Objectivity**
  - It is very important to know what the purpose of the author was to write this article:
    - What is the purpose of this page?
    - Does the author state the goals for this site?
    - Does this page inform/educate?

- **Intended audience**
  - When people write articles, paper, etc, it’s always aimed at a specific audience, for e.g. child development that is aimed at parents.
  - Remember to ask yourself:
    - Is the web the best place for this type of information? Would a print source or an electronic database be a better choice?
    - Check with the reference librarian if you are not sure.

The criteria presented here will help you to critically appraise web resources.