Practical Tips for Evaluating Websites

1. Analyze the content. Does it appear to be of good quality?
   - Look for a published or last updated date.
   - Are sources documented in footnotes or a reference list?
   - Are there links to more information? Are they active or dead links?
   - Is the design appropriate/respectable? (no flashing graphics)
   - Is the language free of emotion?
   - Does the point of view seem impartial?
   - Are there grammatical, spelling, or other errors?
   - Is the site organized well? Is it easy to navigate the content?

2. Look for a date.
   - Is the site current?
   - Is there a last updated date listed?

   Do not count dates that list today’s date in one corner of the site. This is likely code that displays the current date every day.

3. Look for an “About” page. (or Sponsors, Philosophy, Who we are, etc.)
   - What information is provided about the site?
     - Who or what agency is the author? Are they affiliated with any institutions or businesses?
     - What are the author’s credentials or qualifications? What is their bias?
     - How is the organization funded?
     - Is contact information provided – does someone take responsibility for the info?
     - If there is no “About” page, truncate back the URL one / at a time to learn more about the hosting site.

4. Look at the URL (or web address). What can it tell you?
   - Delete everything from the URL after the domain (.com, .org, etc.).
     - What type of organization is behind it?
       - Non-profit (.org)
       - University/college (.edu)
       - Government (.gov, .mil)
       - Business/Commercial (.com)
       - Foreign (.uk, .jp., etc.)

5. The purpose of the site. Why was the site put up on the web?
   - Inform with facts/data?
   - Share/disclose?
   - Entice/sell?
   - Explain/persuade?
   - Dupe/rant/satire?
   - Entertain?