CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING WEBSITES

- Make sure it is **NOT** someone’s personal page or site. Look for these symbols or keywords within the URL: (~ or %, or users, members, or people)

- Check the **domain** or **extension** of the site:
  - .edu = educational institution; typically a college or university
  - .gov .mil .us = government agency
  - .org = typically a non-profit organization, but more companies are using these domains/extensions
  - .com .net = a business or company

Foreign countries have their own domains, for example, .it = Italy, .es = Spain, .jp = Japan

- Is the content appropriate for the domain or extension that is being used?

- Check the **purpose** or **goal** of the site; if they are trying to sell you something or if they are biased, they are **not** a reliable site.

- Who owns the site? Does it make sense that the owner is giving this information? *For example, Bill Gates, a computer/software millionaire, should not be giving you environmental information.*

- How **current** or recently updated is the site?
  - Check for publication date/year or Last Update date.
  - On certain issues or topics, the older the information the less trustworthy it is.

- **Who** wrote the page or provided the content on the page?
  - Is it someone with a professional reputation?
  - Can you find their academic or professional credentials to verify that he/she/it is a reliable source of information?
  - If it’s a company or organization, are they known for providing professional, unbiased information?

- For the information provided, what is the **evidence**?
  - Did they conduct the research?
  - If not, do they cite their sources?
  - Can their sources be found?
  - Are their sources reliable?

- **Is the site biased?** The site is biased if
  - it takes only one side
  - it is trying to sell or promote something/someone
  - they will benefit (usually financially) from obtaining your support/interest

- **Check for quality of the site.** A poor website has
  - Many or excessive advertisements/pop-ups
  - Several grammar or spelling mistakes
  - Coding errors, so the page does not look right
  - Content that is hard to understand

- **Is the site appropriate for your purposes?**

---

3/4/14: Adapted from “Know Your Library” workshops/handouts, UC Berkeley Library, 2012