**Basic Principles of Internet Research**

**Evaluation of Online Material**

The following are generally accepted criteria for the evaluation of web information resources with possible questions you may want to explore when evaluating. Please keep in mind that these are not all necessarily issues of right vs. wrong. The usefulness and appropriateness of the information may depend on what you need and how you intend to use it.

Note: Many of these principles can be carried over to other information sources (books, periodicals, etc.).

- **Accuracy**
  - Who wrote the **contents** of the page and for what purpose?
  - Is information reliable and free from errors?
  - Is the material properly documented with a good bibliography?

- **Authority**
  - Does the author of the page contents provide contact information?
  - Is this person qualified?
  - Who published the document? What are his/her qualifications?
  - Look at the web address: can you determine what institution published the web documents?

- **Objectivity**
  - Why was this material written and who is the intended audience?
  - What opinions or bias are expressed by the author?
  - Is the site factual or is it designed with the intention of changing the user’s opinion on some issue (or for some commercial purpose)?

- **Currency**
  - Does the page provide information on when it was last updated?
  - Do the links seem to be updated or are there a lot of dead links?
  - Is the actual content you are interested in up-to-date?

- **Coverage**
  - Does the page provide good citations or links to additional resources for further study?
  - Are supporting materials (charts, statistics, graphs, etc.) given?
  - Can you access all of the needed information without paying a fee or downloading new software?
Principles and Strategies of Internet Research

The following online tutorials may be of interest:

Choosing & Using Sources (Ohio State):
https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/choosingsources/

MSU Tutorial – Using the Web:
http://library.missouristate.edu/tutorial/mod5/index.html

For Library Circulation policies, please visit
https://library.evangel.edu/about/policies/circ

For a complete list of databases and recommended online resources for EU students, go to
https://library.evangel.edu/az.php