

Guidelines for Evaluating Webpages

The following guidelines are summarized from Hartman, K. and Ackermann, E., 1999. Finding quality information on the internet: Tips and guidelines. Syllabus 13(1): 52-54. Included is a suggested format for citing online references as well as a number of criteria for assessing the validity of a webpage as a reputable reference.

Suggested form of citation for electronic media:

Britton, A. 1995-2000. Crocodilians: Natural history & conservation. Available online at URL:
<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/herpetology/brittoncroc/cnhc.html>.

Who is the author or institution?

If an individual has written the resource, is there biographical information available?

If an institution has produced the resource, does it give information about itself?

Have you seen the author's or institution's name cited in other sources or bibliographies?

How current is the information?

Is there a date on the web page that indicates when the page was placed on the Web?

Is it clear when the page was last updated?

Is some of the information obviously out-of-date?

Does the page creator mention how frequently the material is updated?

Who is the audience?

Is the web page intended for the general public, or is it meant for scholars, practitioners, children, and so forth?

Is the audience clearly stated?

Does the web page meet the needs of its stated audience?

Is the content accurate, objective, and supported by other sources?

Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, or institutional biases?

Is the content intended to be a brief overview of the topic or an in-depth analysis?

If there are facts and statistics included, are they properly cited?

What is the purpose of the information?

Is the purpose of the information to inform, explain, persuade, market a product, or advocate a cause?

Is the purpose clearly stated?

Does the resource fulfill the stated purpose?