

Tips to Evaluate Internet Resources

From PBS TeacherLine course TECH 340 "Evaluating and Organizing Internet Resources"

How does the Web site make use of the Internet? Look for sites that enable you and your students to:

- Read current text relating to a particular subject;
- View dynamic and up-to-date photographs, illustrations, animations, and video;
- Listen to recorded audio clips as well as live audio;
- Download simulations and games relating to curriculum units and access other multimedia content offering interactive, panoramic views of a space or object;
- Visit sites displaying real-time data;
- Send and receive email from keypals (electronic penpals);
- Contact and query mentors and experts;
- Participate in collaborative, problem-solving projects that involve information searches, group creations and virtual gatherings;
- Join an information collection project that includes contributing to the creation of a database and pooled data analysis;
- Publish resources and projects created by you and your students.

What is the quality of the related links? Ask...

- Are the links active and clearly described? Do they point to current information?
- What is the quality of content found on these related sites?
- Is the content found on these related sites appropriate for classroom use?
- Does the site suggest how the related sites could be used to enrich the curriculum?

Is the site well designed? A site should be attractive and easy to navigate. Ask...

- Does the homepage contain a well-labeled table of contents?
- Is the navigation clear and consistent throughout the site? Is it easy to find what you're looking for?
- Do the multimedia elements (graphics, sound, video) complement each other? Do they provide information?

Who is the target audience? Some sites have a very specific appeal, others are much broader. Ask...

- Does the site appeal to a specific grade level and/or curriculum area?
- Is the site intended for just students? Just teachers? Both?
- Are the concepts introduced and language used consistently age- and grade-appropriate?
- Will students require guidance in reading or navigating the site?

Tips to Evaluate Internet Resources, cont.

Does the site support my curriculum unit? Quality sites provide unique and/or up-to-date resources for in-class use. Ask...

- Is the information provided both current and congruent to the topics you are teaching?
- Is the information provided accurate and pedagogically sound?
- Does the site provide resources that allow you to do something in the classroom that you would otherwise be unable to do?
- Are charts, maps, etc. included? Are they well done and meaningful? If not included, is the absence noticeable?
- Are the sources listed primary or secondary or both?

Is the information reliable? Ask...

- Who is the author of site content? Does he/she have a particular bias?
- Is the site supported by an educational institution, a commercial company, a non-profit company, or an individual?
- Can one easily get in touch with the people responsible for site content? Is there an email address for the Webmaster of the site?
- Is the information current? Does the date of the last update appear?
- Is the information credible? Is it factual and accurate? Is the information a form of advertising? Does it try to persuade the reader of something?
- Are there reviews of the site? Has it received any awards? Is the evaluator a credible source?

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