

Tips to Evaluate Internet Resources

How does the Web site use the Internet's capabilities?

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...

- 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) work well with each other? Do they provide information?

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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?

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?
- 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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