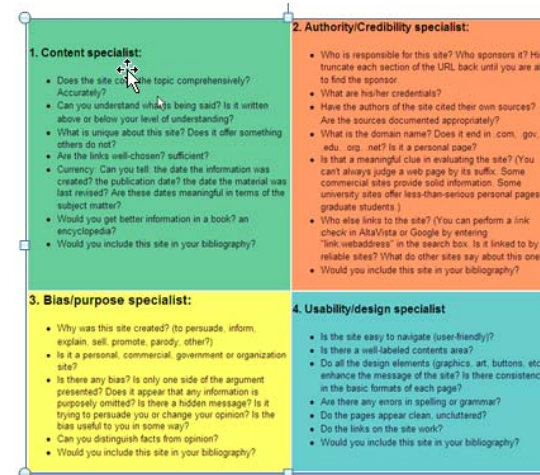
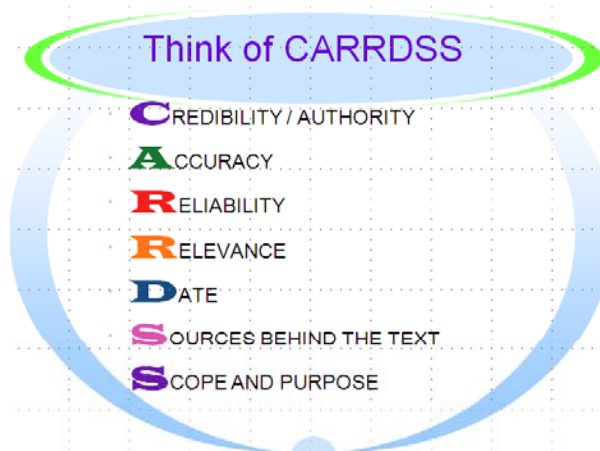


Evaluating Websites: Bogus Websites and Hoaxes

Dr. Jennifer Parker-Moore

21 things for the 21st Century Educator

Clinton RESA, Ingham ISD, Macomb ISD, Shiawassee RESD



Evaluating Websites

- How can you tell if the information on a website is fact or fiction?

**FACT
VS.
FICTION?**

Avoid being laughed at – CHECK YOUR SOURCES!





Critical Evaluation

- Hackers, jokesters, pranksters, and wasters of time/talent spend countless hours creating bogus or fake websites. These hoaxes have web hits in which the unknowing public cites them as fact rather than fiction.
- Another common practical joke is to edit a Wiki (e.g. Wikipedia) with false information.
- *Critical Evaluation* is the use of web site evaluation criteria to know the difference between factual web sites and fictional ones.

Joyce Valenza



Check out Joyce Valenza, a “super” librarian:

- <http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/jvweb.html#Background>

Links to her materials on critical evaluation:

- <http://newtoolsworkshop.wikispaces.com/On+evaluating+information>
- She has offered two web evaluation tools, based on the ages/abilities of your students:
 - BASIC (Elementary)
 - ADVANCED (CARRDS-Secondary)

4 Criteria for Web Evaluation

ELEMENTARY (BASIC)

This is an easy way to teach students how to evaluate web resources:

1. Content
2. Authority/Reliability
3. Bias/Purpose
4. Usability/Design

1. Content specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the site cover the topic comprehensively? Accurately?• Can you understand what is being said? Is it written above or below your level of understanding?• What is unique about this site? Does it offer something others do not?• Are the links well-chosen? sufficient?• Currency: Can you tell the date the information was created? the publication date? the date the material was last revised? Are these dates meaningful in terms of the subject matter?• Would you get better information in a book? an encyclopedia?• Would you include this site in your bibliography?	2. Authority/Credibility specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is responsible for this site? Who sponsors it? Hint: truncate each section of the URL back until you are able to find the sponsor.• What are his/her credentials?• Have the authors of the site cited their own sources? Are the sources documented appropriately?• What is the domain name? Does it end in .com, .gov, .edu, .org, .net? Is it a personal page?• Is that a meaningful clue in evaluating the site? (You can't always judge a web page by its suffix. Some commercial sites provide solid information. Some university sites offer less-than-serious personal pages to graduate students.)• Who else links to the site? (You can perform a link check in AltaVista or Google by entering "link:webaddress" in the search box. Is it linked to by reliable sites? What do other sites say about this one?)• Would you include this site in your bibliography?
3. Bias/purpose specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why was this site created? (to persuade, inform, explain, sell, promote, parody, other?)• Is it a personal, commercial, government or organization site?• Is there any bias? Is only one side of the argument presented? Does it appear that any information is purposely omitted? Is there a hidden message? Is it trying to persuade you or change your opinion? Is it bias useful to you in some way?• Can you distinguish facts from opinion?• Would you include this site in your bibliography?	4. Usability/design specialist: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the site easy to navigate (user-friendly)?• Is there a well-labeled contents area?• Do all the design elements (graphics, art, buttons, etc.) enhance the message of the site? Is there consistency in the basic formats of each page?• Are there any errors in spelling or grammar?• Do the pages appear clean, uncluttered?• Do the links on the site work?• Would you include this site in your bibliography?

WEB SITE EVALUATION
(Joyce Valenza, 2004)

WEB SITE EVALUATION (Joyce Valenza, 2004)

1. Content

- Does the site cover the topic comprehensively? Accurately?
- Can you understand what is being said? Is it written above or below your level of understanding?
- What is unique about this site? Does it offer something others do not?
- Are the links well-chosen? sufficient?
- Currency: Can you tell: the date the information was created? the publication date? the date the material was last revised? Are these dates meaningful in terms of the subject matter?
- Would you get better information in a book? an encyclopedia?
- Would you include this site in your bibliography?

3. Bias/purpose

- Why was this site created? (to persuade, inform, explain, sell, promote, parody, other?)
- Is it a personal, commercial, government or organization site?
- Is there any bias? Is only one side of the argument presented? Does it appear that any information is purposely omitted? Is there a hidden message? Is it trying to persuade you or change your opinion? Is the bias useful to you in some way?
- Can you distinguish facts from opinion?
- Would you include this site in your bibliography?

2. Authority/Credibility

- Who is responsible for this site? Who sponsors it? Hint: truncate each section of the URL back until you are able to find the sponsor.
- What are his/her credentials?
- Have the authors of the site cited their own sources? Are the sources documented appropriately?
- What is the domain name? Does it end in .com, .gov, .edu, .org, .net? Is it a personal page?
- Is that a meaningful clue in evaluating the site? (You can't always judge a web page by its suffix. Some commercial sites provide solid information. Some university sites offer less-than-serious personal pages to graduate students.)
- Who else links to the site? (You can perform a *link check* in AltaVista or Google by entering "link:webaddress" in the search box. Is it linked to by reliable sites? What do other sites say about this one?)
- Would you include this site in your bibliography?

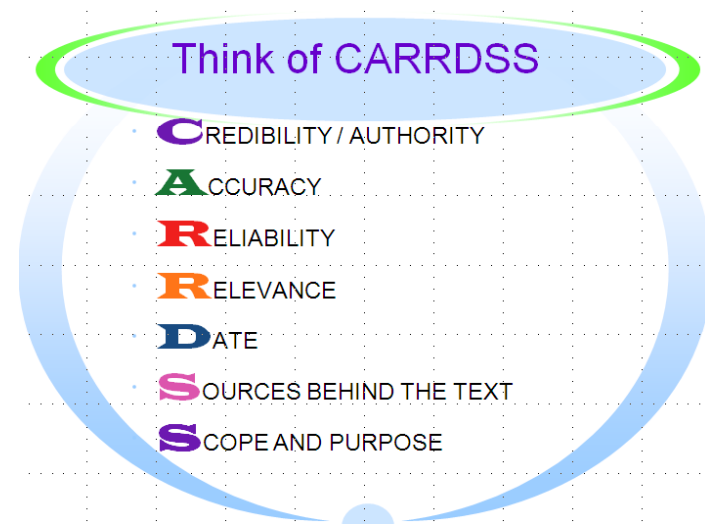
4. Usability/design

- Is the site easy to navigate (user-friendly)?
- Is there a well-labeled contents area?
- Do all the design elements (graphics, art, buttons, etc.) enhance the message of the site? Is there consistency in the basic formats of each page?
- Are there any errors in spelling or grammar?
- Do the pages appear clean, uncluttered?
- Do the links on the site work?
- Would you include this site in your bibliography?

7 Criteria for Web Evaluation

SECONDARY (ADVANCED)

- Recently, Joyce Valenza took web evaluation to another level, with the CARRDS system.
- Think about ages of students when considering which web evaluation system to use.



CARRDSS System
Joyce Valenza, 2008

7 Criteria for Web Evaluation

SECONDARY (ADVANCED)

Think of CARRDSS

- **C**REDIBILITY / AUTHORITY
- **A**CCURACY
- **R**ELIABILITY
- **R**ELEVANCE
- **D**ATE
- **S**OURCES BEHIND THE TEXT
- **S**COPE AND PURPOSE

Verify a Hoax

Check these sites to verify spoofs, hoaxes, urban legends or myths you may have read about:

– [About.com Urban Legends](http://urbanlegends.about.com)

<http://urbanlegends.about.com>

– [CDC Health Hoaxes & Rumors](http://www.cdc.gov/hoax_rumors.htm)

http://www.cdc.gov/hoax_rumors.htm

– [Vmyths](http://www.vmyths.com)

<http://www.vmyths.com>

– [Snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

<http://www.snopes.com>

Bogus Websites

Check out this list of well-known bogus and hoax sites:

- [Critical Evaluation Websites-bogus&hoax.doc](#)
- Select 2 websites to review
- Critique each website using either BASIC or ADVANCED system
- Include web address, screen shots, and reflection for your portfolio

Challenge Points

- Optional: Locate a bogus website that is not on the list. Critically evaluate the website and submit digitally.