Evaluating internet sites

Who is responsible?

Find out who is providing the content and evaluate their authority. The About Us page should give this information. Check whether it is a Government body, Professional association or not for profit institution, University, research organisations or just an enthusiastic lay person.

Are they contactable?

Can you contact them? Ideally you need a physical address and phone number or at least an email address. Be wary if there is no contact information or if you can't easily find who runs it.

Is it current?

Check currency of information. New research and statistics occur. Look for clues saying when the information was updated. If there is no date, try some of the links on the page. If they are broken the page might be quite old

Are they qualified?

Is there an Editorial board or committee with qualifications? Some internet sites are people providing support to each other but they are not authorities or qualified. Is the author a person qualified in what they are making the website about?

Is the Information reliable?

Is the information fact or opinion? If facts are sources noted or acknowledged? Are these reputable sources such as government statistics, World Health Organisation data or papers published in peer reviewed medical, scientific or literary etc. journals? Claims should be accompanied by a reference to published research.

Who is funding the site?

Check to see if the site is funded by government agencies, charities, donations a business or commercial advertising. Ads should be clearly defined.

Check the accuracy of the information by comparing it to other sources.

Is there any bias?

Does the author have a vested interest in supplying a particular point of view? Is any cause being promoted?

Objectivity

Work out how objective the information is. Are both sides of the case given? Does the author rely on emotion?

The following tables may help you evaluate

Part 1: How does it look? Put an X in the "yes" or "no" column for each	Yes	No
Are the pictures on the page helpful?		
Is each section of the page labelled with a heading?		
Is the spelling correct on the page?		
Is the authors name and email address on the page?		
Is there a date that tells you when the page was made?		
Is there a date on the page that tells you when it was last updated?		
Is there an image map (big picture with links) on the page?		
If you go to another page is there a way to get back to the first page?		
Are there photographs on the page?		
Do the photos look real?		

Part 2; What's on the page and who put it there? Put an X in the "yes" or "no" column for each	YES	NO
Does the title of the page tell you what it is about?		
Is there an introduction on the page telling you what is included?		
Is the information on the page useful for your project?		
Would you have gotten more information from Wikipedia? (online Encyclopaedia)		
Is the information up to date?		
Does the page lead you to some other good information (links)?		
Does the author of the page present some information you disagree with?		
Does the author of the page present some information that you think is wrong?		
Do you feel that the author is knowledgeable about the topic?		