

The “Four A’s” of Website Evaluation

In Website evaluation, we use the "Four A's." This means we look to see that the site is **Accessible, Accurate, Appropriate, and Appealing**

Accessible – Is the site still available several months after a first visit? Is it easy to find with any search engine? How long does it take to load? Is navigation through the site easy or is it confusing?

Accurate / Authorship – Do you know anything on the subject? Who are the authors? Are the authors experts on the subject? Is that information clearly stated? Does the site contain information which is up to date? Does a novice agree with or contradict the experts? Does the author help fill in blanks or create more questions? Is the last update of information stated? Are the links to other corresponding sites or do you find “dead links” (site not found)? Are misspellings or grammatical mistakes present on the site?

Appropriate – Is the information easily read? Is it very easy to understand or too technical? Do the pictures support information or hinder the website? Are the explanations clear and concise? Does the author assume too much or too little of the intended audience? Does the site give adequate information to answer research questions? Or does it give a large number of links rather than information?

Appealing – Is the site attractive? Does it contain pages of text or are quality pictures interspersed with the text? Is the background a good contrast with the print? Is it stark and plain or pleasantly appealing? Are they easy to understand or do they move and change to distract from the information? Is the site easy to use?

Domains – Clues to what the site will be like.

.edu	=	education site (college, university)
.org	=	organization (charitable, religious, union, lobbying group or other)
.com	=	commercial site (business with expenses, may provide good information)
.gov	=	government site (Whitehouse, State Department, NASA)
.net	=	network two + computers creating a network (often network provider)
~	=	designates a personal website – may be attached to any domain

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Evaluate one of the sites below using the “Four A’s.” Record your answers on the sheet provided. If time allows, use a separate sheet of paper and evaluate another site.

1. <http://www.wto.org/>
2. <http://www.rythospital.com/nanodocs/>
3. <http://descy.50megs.com/akcj3/bmd.html>
4. <http://www.ayleorgnet.com/>

Examples of good sites:

<http://oncolink.upenn.edu/>

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/home/index.asp>

<http://www.nasa.gov>