

Make Your Sites Air-Tight for Evaluation

by © June Kaminski, MSN PhD(c)

Most designers realize that we are entering a new wave of website standards and evaluation. Viewers demand that website content, especially on sites that promote self-directed information, is reliable and valid. Designers need to be aware of these emerging standards of web evaluation. They need to incorporate these designers in their design scheme right from the beginning.



The Internet can be a valuable resource for important information. It is vital that people find the most reliable sources of information to ensure safe practice in adopting initiatives suggested on the Internet. Various frameworks for evaluative criteria of websites exist. I have compiled the most common criteria to help you on your quest for accurate and valid information conveyance.

Feel free to print out and follow the following checklist. As you design your sites, keep this checklist in mind. If your site reflects all five of these primary criteria, you can rest assured that the quality of the site's information meets the requirements of safe and reliable standards. Ensure that the answer to every question is easily answered by viewers as they explore your site.

-----EVALUATION CRITERIA CHECKLIST-----

Validity

1. Who is the author of the page?
2. What are the author's credentials?
3. What are their qualifications and associations?
4. Is the information about the author verifiable?
5. Are affiliative organizations clearly identified?

Currency

1. Is it clear when the site was first developed?
2. Are revision dates clearly stated?
3. Is the site actively maintained?

Accuracy

1. Is the site content reviewed by experts?
2. Is there an editorial board or academic affiliation?
3. Are there references to reliable wellness journals?
4. How usable is the content of the website?

Content

1. Are sources of information clearly indicated? Can they be verified?
2. Are spelling, grammar and content accurate and consistent?
3. Is the content enhanced with graphics and images?
4. How valuable is the information in the content?
5. Is there a disclaimer outlining the purpose, scope, authority, limitations and currency of the content?

Purpose

1. Are there links to other accurate sources of information?
2. What are the goals and purpose of the website?
3. Is a sponsor identified on the website? What is their affiliation?
4. Is the information one-sided or biased?
5. Is the purpose of the website to promote or sell a product?
6. Who is the intended audience?

Links

MedCertain Collaboration (2000) *Evaluate a Website*

http://www.medcertain.org/old/English/Consumer/Evaluate_a_website/evaluate_a_website.htm

British Library and the University of Oxford (2000) *The Discern Instrument*

http://www.discern.org.uk/discern_instrument.htm

Management Centre International Limited. *Website Effectiveness Review*

<http://www.mcil.co.uk/7-10-criteria.htm>

© June Kaminski Published: 2002