

Element 5 Evaluating the Quality of Information on the Internet

You need to be aware that anyone can post anything on the Internet, and that **not everything you read on the Internet is credible.**

Many sites only exist to attempt to sell an idea or a product. In general, you should consider:

- **Site purpose:** Determine whether the main purpose of the site is to inform or to persuade (advocate for a cause).
- **Authors:** The best sites are produced by those who have appropriate education, training, or experience to write with authority on the topic. Check site documents or external sources to find out more about the author.
- **Content:** Consider whether the content seems biased. Does the author have a "vested interest" in the topic? Look for documentation of claims and a balanced point of view.
- **Coverage:** Shop around for the best source. You can compare one page to others on the same topic to see which provides better coverage.
- **Currency:** If you are looking for the most current information on a topic, be sure to determine when information was added to a site.
- **Recognition:** Also try to determine whether the site has been recognized as exemplary, either in reviews or by others linking to it.

