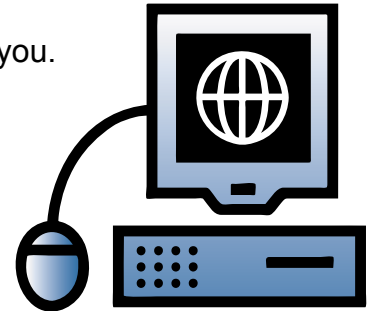


Evaluating Health Information on the Web

The Web is a great and powerful source of information. On this site, we have provided you with links to other sites that we have evaluated and found credible and useful. You may wish to “surf” on your own to learn more about arthritis and other health issues.

Before you head off on your search, print our checklist and bring it with you. Use one of the “gateway” health sites we’ve listed. Or visit some of our sources to learn more about evaluating health information on the Web.



CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING WEB SITES

When reviewing a Web site for health information, be sure you can identify the owner of the site, the sources and the currentness of the information. Be skeptical. Gather other opinions. And consult with your health care provider.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

What does the Web address tell you?

- .com (a commercial site)
- .org (a nonprofit site)
- .edu (an educational site)
- .gov/.mil/.us (a government site)
- .net (internet service provider)
- .other

Who owns the site, and why? What is their interest?

What makes the author/owner an expert on this subject? Is there a bias to the information?

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

What is the purpose of the site?

- sell
- persuade
- inform/provide facts, data
- humor/satire

How was the information gathered?

- Are the research methods given?
- If the information is second-hand, is it well documented?

- Who does this site link to? Do the links work?
- Who links to this site?
- The Google search engine can give you a list of all of the sites that are linked to the site you are evaluating. In Google.com, type link: followed by the Web address of the site. (For example, to find who links to this Minnesota Arthritis Program site, I would go to Google and type in: link:[http://](http://http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/arthritis/) Note: there is no space after link:.)

Is the information complete? Are different views, treatment options and possible complications mentioned?

Get a second opinion from other Web sites or your health care provider.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

- How current is the information given? When was the information last updated?
- Does the material agree with other current knowledge on the subject?
- Is there newer information elsewhere?

Evaluating Health Information on the Web

GATEWAY HEALTH SITES

These sites evaluate health-related sites and provide links to their recommendations.

<http://www.healthfinder.gov>
<http://www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html#5>
<http://www.noahhealth.org>
<http://www.quackwatch.org>



SOURCES

Barker, J. (2003, January 6). Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask. Retrieved June 4, 2003, from <http://http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>.

Hopson, Katherine (2003, November 13). Hunting Health. U.S. News and World Report. Pp. 48-50.

Medical Library Association (MLA) (2003, February 14). A User's Guide to Finding and Evaluating Health Information on the Web. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from [http:// http://www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html](http://http://www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html).

MEDLINEplus (2003, August 5). Evaluating Health Information. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from [http:// http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html](http://http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html).

National Cancer Institute (NCI) (2002, July 3). 10 Things to Know about Evaluating Medical Resources on the Web. Retrieved December 3, 2003 from <http://nccam.nci.nih.gov/health/webresources/index.htm>.

Last updated 2004-08-31