

Role Questions

Content Specialist:

- Does the site cover the topic comprehensively? Accurately?
- Can you understand what is being said? Is it written above or below your level of understanding?
- What is unique about this site? Does it offer something others do not?
- Are the links well-chosen? sufficient?
- Can you find the date the information was created? the publication date? the date the material was last revised? Are these dates meaningful in terms of the subject matter?
- Would you get better information in a reference book or another source?
- Would you include this site as a reference on a works cited page for a research paper?

Authority/Credibility Specialist:

- Who is responsible for this site? Who sponsors it? Hint: truncate each section of the URL back until you are able to find the sponsor.
- What are his/her credentials?
- Have the authors of the site cited their sources? Are there links to these sources?
- What is the domain name? Does it end in .com, .gov, .edu, .org, .net? Is it a personal page?
- Is that a meaningful clue in evaluating the site? (You can't always judge a web page by its suffix. Some commercial sites provide solid information. Some university sites offer less-than-serious personal pages to graduate students.)
- Who else links to the site? (You can perform a link check in Google by entering "link:webaddress" in the search box. Is it linked to by reliable sites? What do other sites say about this one?)
- Would you include this site as a reference on a works cited page for a research paper?

Bias/Purpose Specialist:

- Why was this site created? (to persuade, inform, explain, sell, promote, parody, other?)
- Is it a personal, commercial, government or organization site?
- Is there any bias? Is only one side of the argument presented? Does it appear that any information is purposely omitted? Is there a hidden message? Is it trying to persuade you or change your opinion? Is the bias useful to you in some way?
- Can you distinguish facts from opinion?
- Would you include this site as a reference on a works cited page for a research paper?

Usability/Design Specialist:

- Is the site easy to navigate (user-friendly)?
- Is there a well-labeled contents area?
- Do all the design elements (graphics, art, buttons, etc.) enhance the message of the site? Is there consistency in the basic formats of each page?
- Are there any errors in spelling or grammar?
- Do the pages appear clean, uncluttered?
- Do the links on the site work?
- Would you include this site as a reference on a works cited page for a research paper?