Website Evaluation -

Library and digital literacy series

Website Evaluation – Library and digital literacy series

Why is there a need to do this?

We need to qualitatively evaluate each website we use to ensure:

➢ Any research data found on the website and used in a assignment is accurate, current, can be trusted and adds value

➢ Any decision made based on the information found is sound and therefore never regretted

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What is at risk if we do not?

There are a numbers of risks if the website used is not properly reviewed.

These include:

➢ Getting a fail mark for an assignment as the information used was wrong, out of date or plagiarised

➢ Being unable to complete your course because you were asked to leave the university

➢ Being asked to leave your job as the information you provided led to a decision with negative financial and/or reputational consequences

➢ Having your ID stolen and fraud committed against you

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How we carry out the evaluation – Authority

Find out who:

➢ Created the website - Professional body? Marketing company? Commercial entity?

➢ Writes on it - Professional person? Recognised knowledge guru on topic? Or fraudster?

➢ Maintains the site - Reputable body such as a government agency? Or a seventeen year old a few streets away from his bedroom?

Each answer and/or all three collectively could impact favourably or unfavourably on the value or lack of value to the website

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How we evaluate – Accuracy and Currency

Check the content of the site for accurate and topic specific currency:

➢ Government, legal and news sites need to be updated regularly, even minute by minute

➢ Cultural sites such as for museums, galleries or poetry do not need to be updated as often

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How we evaluate – Design

Are you able to check the following:

- ➢ When the site design was made
- ➢ Whether it is easy to move between pages
- ➢ That there are no error messages because all links work
- ➢ The pages do not stall or are difficult to load, or read
- ➢ The pages are easy to navigate
- ➢ Help screens are available and are effective
- ➢ A searchable feature/site map is available

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How we evaluate – Objectivity and Scope

Review the content held on the website. See if:

- It is subjective (biased or opinionated), objective (factual), or mixed

- You can locate a link to information (about the organisation or mission statement) detailing the purpose for the web site

- Is it a personal web page, a company or organisation web site, a forum for educational/public service information, a forum for scholarly/research information, entertainment, an advertising or commercial site, or a forum for ideas, opinions, or points of view

- You able to contact the author/organisation

- The site publishes feedback from other users (even critical feedback)

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Any questions?

Thank you for listening

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