

## Strategian Evaluating Information

### *Author/Publisher:*

**Who is the author or reporter?**

- **What expertise does the author/reporter have that lends authority to the information coming from him or her?**

**Who is the author or reporter affiliated with?**

- **What motive(s) might that organization or the author/reporter have in presenting that information in that particular way?**

**Who published the information?**

- **What motive(s) might that publisher have in presenting that information in that particular way?**
- **What review process, if any, does the publisher go through before accepting and then printing, reporting, or displaying a piece of information?**

**Some additional questions to ask if the information appears on a Web page --**

- **Does the Web page contain one or more *easily-found* links for contacting the person or group who put the page together (and not just a generic link to a "Webmaster")?**
- **And, if you do contact the author of the page, does the author respond?**
- **Does the Web page contain *easily-found* information about who the author is, what particular point of view they may support, and what expertise they may have?**

### *Date of Publication:*

**When was the information published or last revised?**

**Is the publication or revision date appropriate for the topic and for what you wish to do with that topic?**

- **Depending on the topic, how current the information is may be very important. Is a publication or revision date easily found?**

**Content:**

**Is the information presented in such a way that it is understandable and easy-to-follow?**

**What audience is the information aimed at (scholars, the "average" person on the street, undergraduates, children, etc.)?**

**Where did the information come from?**

- **Is it original research, a review of research done by others, an overview of a topic based on the work of others, is it strictly someone's opinion, an analysis of current or past events, a mixture of these things, etc.?**
- **If the publication promotes a distinct point of view (as opposed to objectively presenting a range of viewpoints about a topic), is that point of view admitted and explained?**

**Does the publication contain a bibliography (a list of articles, books, etc. from which the information was partly or wholly derived)?**

**If the results of research or a survey/opinion poll are presented, how much information is given about how those results were obtained?**

- **Are the methods used to obtain those results valid?**
- **Have those research or survey/poll results been replicated by others?**

**An additional question to ask if the information appears on a Web site --**

- **Does the Web page appear to be regularly maintained? Not all Web pages need frequent updating, but regular, periodic maintenance is a good sign that the page is still active and that things that don't work will get fixed ... or, at least, that someone still cares about the page and the information it presents.**

**Does the article, book, government document, news program, Web site, etc. provide answers to the relevant questions above? If not ... *why not?***

Updated August 31, 2006

Kevin Engel ([kevin@strategian.com](mailto:kevin@strategian.com))

<http://www.strategian.com/evaluate.pdf>

copyright 1998-Present Kevin Engel