

Evaluating Blogs

Think critically about and determine reliability.

Use the questions below as guidelines for evaluating your sources.

Audience

- **Ask:** who is the intended audience? Is this source appropriate for the intended audience of your research?

Authority

- **Ask:** who is the blogger?

This may be challenge with so many blogs offering spotty or nonexistent about pages. That may be a clue in itself.

References/Citations

- **Ask:** what sorts of materials is the blogger reading or citing? Does this blogger have influence? Who and how many people link to the blog? Who is commenting? Does this blog appear to be part of a community?

The best blogs are likely to be hubs for folks who share interests with the blogger.

Scope/Comprehensiveness

- **Ask:** is this content covered in depth or with authority? How sophisticated is the language, grammar and the spelling? Is this blog alive and active (note the number of links/hits)? Is there a substantial archive?

Currency

- **Ask:** how current are the posts? At what point in a story's lifetime did the post appear?

Examining a story's date may offer clues as to the reliability of a blog entry.

Accuracy/Objectivity

- **Ask:** is the site upfront about its bias? Does it recognize/discuss other points of view?

For certain information tasks, an essay or debate that exposes bias may be useful.

Credibility

- **Ask:** if the blogger is not a professional journalist or expert on the subject, is this a first-hand view that would be valuable to your research? Is it a unique perspective?

Tools like **Technorati** and **Blogpulse** can help you assess the influence of a blog.