

## TIPS FOR EVALUATING INTERNET SITES FOR CREDIBILITY

More and more of us are turning to the World Wide Web for health information. The Web has opened up many new opportunities for improving our knowledge of health issues and in becoming better health care consumers. But the quality of health information we obtain over the Internet varies tremendously. Thus, it is important that we assess the credibility of each Web page that we access.

Document the source of the information to the fullest extent possible. Always scrutinize header information and return to the home page to determine the source of the information.

Try to determine the credibility of the source.

- Is it clear what organization is responsible for the contents of the page?
- How reputable is the source?
- Who is the author?
- What are the author's qualifications for writing on the subject?
- Is the information timely?
- Is factual information clearly delineated from opinions or speculation?
- When was the site created?
- When was the site last up-dated?
- Attempt to verify the information using other sources

Are there contact and source information?

- Does the site contain a phone number or postal address to contact for more information?
- Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified through another source?

Web pages can sometimes be susceptible to alternation.

- "Hackers" may alter the information—another important reason to verify the information using other sources

On the Web, distinctions between advertising, information, and entertainment can be extremely blurred.

- What are the goals/aims of the Web site?
- Is the information presented with a minimum of bias?
- Is the Web site trying to sell or promote a specific product or service?
- Is the information intended for entertainment?
- If there is advertising on the page, is it clearly differentiated from the informational content?

Kentucky Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs  
*KY TEACH Project*



*MCHB HRTW*