EVALUATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

AUTHORITY

- What is the source of the information? Is this a scholarly, peer-reviewed publication?
- What is the method of access? Did you access through a controlled gateway such as a database?
- Is the author an expert or authority? What is his/her affiliation? What else has he/she written?
 Is he or she often referenced or cited by other authors?

ACCURACY & CURRENCY

- Is the date written evident? Are the dates of specific datasets within the source provided? Assess the writing for time-sensitive information and its relevance to your purpose.
- Are the sources for any factual information and data clearly listed so they can be verified in another source?

OBJECTIVITY

- Is the author or sponsor advocating particular viewpoints or causes? Are any biases or assumptions noted?
- Does the publication appear to be marketing services or products?

RELEVANCE & AUDIENCE

- Does this source give some relevant data, information or useful background for your research question?
- Who is the intended audience? Is the information written for consumers, employees, investors, students, researchers, specialists, or experts? Is the level of content appropriate for your research?

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Prepared by librarians Davida Scharf and Andrea Spender, New Jersey Institute of Technology, based on Sources: NJIT Library; "Critically Analyzing Information Sources" Cornell University Library; "Critical Evaluation of Resources, UC Berkeley Library. Updated May 2007.