

Fact Sheet— Tips for a Good Web Site

The following tips give you a good way to evaluate and/or create a Web site.

1. **Find out who is the author or sponsor of the Web site.** Is the author or sponsor of the Web site easy to locate? You should be able to quickly tell who put up the Web site and be able to find out more about the author or sponsor.
2. **Determine the purpose of the Web site.** Is the purpose of the Web site clear? Consider the following:
 - Is it easy to tell who the site is intended for?
 - Is the information appropriate for the intended user?
 - Can you easily tell if the site is selling something or offering games?
 - If there is advertising on the site, is it suitable for children?
 - Will the site teach a child something interesting or spark his or her imagination?
 - Does the site have a bias? Is the bias harmful in any way? Often, the information from a biased Web site is one-sided, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it cannot be trusted. Many Web sites have biases and are still useful. For example, health and safety organizations have a bias about safe behaviors and that certainly doesn't make them harmful. However, other biases, such as racism, can be harmful or inappropriate.
3. **Determine if the Web site is user-friendly.**
 - Are the directions about how to use and interact with the Web site upfront and easy to follow? For example, are the directions and information easy to read?
 - Are the skills needed to use and understand the Web site appropriate to the age of the user? For example, a site that is good for you might not be easy for a young child to use.
 - Are the recommended links on the Web site safe and useful?
4. **Make sure the Web site is attractive and interesting.** Are the graphics fun or exciting? Does the site use appropriate language?
5. **Find out if the Web site is a secure site.** Does it keep your use of the site private? If it asks you to download files, does it protect you from spyware? If the address in the address bar doesn't match up with the site you are on,

suspect someone is trying to deceive you. Use the Fact Sheet—Cyberspace Glossary to check out the following safety and security terms on the Internet: SSL, padlock icon, virus blocker, anti-spyware, pop-up blocker.

6. **Determine if you have to pay a fee to use the Web site.** Many sites don't require a fee. However, some very valuable Web sites require the user to pay a fee. Be sure you have permission from parents before letting children access fee-based Web sites.
7. **Don't depend on suffixes.** All domain names have to use a suffix, or zone, depending on the type of organization or Web site author involved. You can use these suffixes to help you surf the web looking for interesting and safe sites, but they are not a guarantee of safety. Just about any Web site can be mirrored or mimicked by some bogus group. These are some of the more common suffixes:
 - .com—site of a business
 - .net—Internet network site; usually a business site
 - .int—an international site (some sites have the country's initials; for example, .ca for Canada, .uk for United Kingdom)
 - .edu—an educational institution, such as a college or school board site
 - .org—a not-for-profit organization
 - .mil—a military organization
 - .gov—a government site

***Note:** The above suffixes are the ones most commonly used on the Internet. However, there are several others. Always be sure you check with an adult before clicking a site with an unfamiliar suffix.*