

Paper : M111 (c)

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES AND
LITERATURE IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIT III: INFORMATION SOURCES
AND EVALUATION

Topic: EVALUATION OF PRINT
RESOURCES

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EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Authority
- Scope
- Contents
- Accuracy and Currency
- Objectivity
- Arrangement
- Treatment
- Intended Audience
- Format
- Special Features

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Indexes
- Bibliographies

1. AUTHORITY

- ◎ The authoritativeness of the reference sources can usually be assessed on the basis of the reputation, credibility, experience and educational qualifications of the publishers, compilers, and editors. The sources should be up-to-date, accurate and reliable. Author's credentials, such as his or her organizational affiliation, education background, current position, and years of experience.

Contd....

- ⦿ Is Author qualified to write authoritatively on a certain topic.
- ⦿ Authors with advanced degrees or other published books and articles tend to be more credible.
- ⦿ Determine if the author is currently associated with a reputable organization by considering the organization's membership.
- ⦿ Does the author provide contact information, e.g., e-mail address, telephone number, etc.
- ⦿ Creator of the document or a compiler of information resources.

2. SCOPE

- ① The scope of the work can be judged from its purpose stated in the preface and introduction. The scope of this variety of reference sources differs from each other. They can be either general or restricted to a specific language, subject or area. Their coverage can be comprehensive or selective, current or retrospective, international, national, regional or local, pertaining to a subject or a profession, etc.

Contd...

- What is the subject of the source?
- Does it relate to the topic?
- Does the preface or introduction state a purpose and address the issues?
- Does the table of contents or index indicate sufficient topic coverage?
- Is there sufficient breadth and depth of coverage on the topic?

3. CONTENTS

- ⦿ Does the material cover the topic as we thought it would. If it covers research topic only marginally, one may need to select other sources?
- ⦿ Does it provide background information or does it focus on a more specific area or problem?
- ⦿ What does this source add to what we already know about the topic?
- ⦿ Is source updating with the latest developments in a field.

4. ACCURACY AND CURRENCY

- ④ Check accuracy and currency of the content. Accuracy of the content can be checked by comparing it with other works on the same topic. Currency can be checked by seeing the copyright date of the source and references cited by the source.

5. OBJECTIVITY

- ① The author should present a balanced view of various perspectives on the subject. Look for signs that the author is presenting a biased view and is trying to convince you of that view. Try to avoid using information sources which are published, sponsored, or endorsed by a special interest group or a private company.

6. ARRANGEMENT

- ⑥ The arrangement of the reference sources also differ from one another. It can be alphabetical, chronological, geographical or classified. Whatever may be the method of arrangement, it should be systematic and consistent. It should facilitate the users to search required information easily and quickly.

7. TREATMENT

- ◎ The serial ready reference source such as yearbooks, almanacs, supplements to encyclopaedia, published at regular intervals should be checked for their up-to-dateness, accuracy, thoroughness, reliability, simplicity and objectivity. The style of two groups of advances and subject handbooks should be scholarly, where as manuals and practical handbooks should be simple and popular.

8. INTENDED AUDIENCE

- ⦿ Who is the intended audience for this work?
- ⦿ General audience - written for people with an 8th - 12th grade education
- ⦿ Professional - written for those with an undergraduate and graduate college education.
- ⦿ Specialized - written for those with an interest in a specialized area of study i.e. designers, doctors, advocates, engineers, etc.

Contd...

- ⦿ Knowing the intended audience of a book or an article can help you determine its appropriateness for your question or research.
- ⦿ If the author intended his or her work to be enjoyed by the general public, it may not be sufficiently scholarly for such purposes.
- ⦿ Language and the word selection understandable and appropriate for the intended readership - too simple or too difficult

9. FORMAT

- ⦿ The value of the format can be determined by verifying the following aspects of the reference sources.
- ⦿ Size: Ready reference sources are usually single volume tools. Some handbooks are available in multi volumes. They should be handy.
- ⦿ Typography: The size and style of the type faces should be clear and legible. The proper spacing between the letters, words and lines and layout of the columns improve the readability of the sources.

Contd...

- ① The distinct difference between the headings and sub-headings by using the bold letters or different sizes of the letters facilitate the usability of the sources.
- ① Paper: Good quality papers should be used for durability. Thin and opaque papers reduce the weight and make the size of the source handy.
- ① Binding: Binding should be of leather, rexin or calico cover and should be light but strong enough to withstand heavy and rough use.

Contd...

- Physical Appearance: The physical get-up and appearance should be appealing, functional and pleasing with golden or ink print lettering.

10. SPECIAL FEATURES

- Most reference sources are of specific frequency i.e. annual, biennial, or published at specific or irregular interval. They are referred to answer factual and trend questions. So, by their very nature, they become out of date soon after the latest editions are published. It is necessary therefore, to check them for the special criteria.

Contd...

- ◎ Recency: As reference sources are referred to locate information on dates, events, persons, organisations or specific subject, they should be checked for recency. Some few well-known events, changes in addresses, recruitment of eminent scholars, important dates, inventions or notable achievements of the previous year are included or not.

Contd...

- Brevity: Since most of these sources are browsed through to enhance general knowledge, the information should be available in brief, pinpointed, factual form which are easy to locate and remember. The long descriptive articles are meant for serious study.

Contd...

- ① Trends in Development: The source should indicate trends in development. One should be able to see the continuity in development over the years whether it is scientific advances, sociological research, political events, personalities or organisations.
- ① Methods of Compilation: They are varied types and are different in their nature, scope and coverage. Hence, one has to look for the method used for its compilation. The data may be collected from the primary or secondary source. Sometimes either census or survey method is used for compilation.

12. INDEXES

- ◎ The whole purpose of reference source is defeated, if the user is not able to locate the required information easily and quickly. Thus, it is necessary to have detailed, exhaustive indexes - chronological, alphabetical, classified and geographical having cross reference of 'see' and 'see also' and additional keys or citations. These will provide guidance to interested readers to locate the information and also assist them to refer the primary sources if they want more details.

13. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- ① The references and bibliographies given at the end of the articles in hand-books are very useful to the subject specialists for further reference. As they are secondary or sometimes even tertiary sources, the references will help them to refer to the primary sources for more information and authoritative data.



CONCLUSION

- It is pertinent to follow the evaluation criteria for the best sources to be selected for the library users'.

REFERENCES

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- ◎ Hjørland, Birger. Methods for evaluating information sources: An annotated catalogue. *Journal of Information Science* Vol 38, no. 3, 2012, pp 258–268