The Seven Steps to Web Evaluation (A-G)

STEP g

GOOD LINKS

Good links going, good links leaving !

Incoming Links – Are there sites that link to the page?

Outgoing Links – Does the page link out to quality sites?
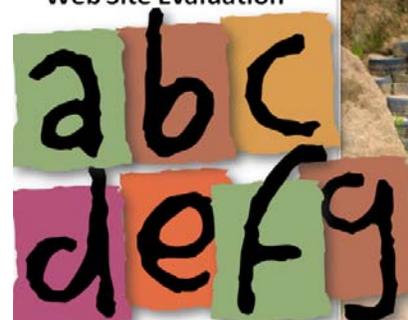
Working Links – Are the links in working order?

21 st Century Educational Technology and Learning

http://21centuryedtech.wordpress.com/

With Michael Gorman

The Seven Steps To Web Site Evaluation

abc defg

Graphics from Microsoft Word 2007

The Seven Steps to Web Site Evaluation – Step G

G Is For Good Links

In order to evaluate a web page it is useful to know a little bit about web links. Web pages usually have incoming links (links going to the page), outgoing links (links the website is choosing to send the reader to), and broken links (links that no longer work). Take a moment to discover what story a link can tell in the usefulness of a web site for research.

1. **Incoming Links** – Defined as links going to a page. People choose to link to a site for various reasons. Sometimes it is a vote of confidence towards a page, or to point to a page as an example of something, or possibly a mutual belief that needs to be checked for bias. For this reason it is prudent to check out a web site to see who is linking to, what type of sites are linking to, and how many sites are linking to. In order to do this it is helpful to use the Google search engine. In the Google basic search one must type in the word link, followed by a colon, followed by the web address. Do not use spaces.
   An example is (**link: http://www.talkingnorthernseapuppies.com**)
   Google will return the number of linking sites and who they are. Now it is time to investigate. This will give an idea of a site's popularity and also who is linking to that site. One may find that thousands of websites are linking to **www.talkingnorthernseapuppies.com.** This could mean it is a great site because of popularity. Taking a closer look, the researcher may see that most of the sites linking to it are sites that list web site hoaxes and jokes. Not a good idea to use this site if the researcher's purpose is to publish a scientific article on what was thought to be the discovery of a newly found animal.

2. **Outgoing Links** – Just as important as links going to a page, outgoing links point to web pages that the author or sponsor of the web site wants to lead the web reader to. A good researcher will study these sites. They could consist of excellent sites that allow for further research on the subject of interest. On the other hand, they may show a pattern that should make one cautious. It may be possible that most links are going to opinionated or biased sites that support a belief or movement desired by the author of sponsor. They may even be going to money generating sites which may make a researcher question the original site where their investigation began Understanding outgoing links will either assist in discovering more great sites to use for research, or suggest that the originating site may not be the best to include.

3. **Broken Links** – These are the links that one may click on that lead nowhere, or to the wrong place. Having a few broken links can happen in any site, considering the ever changing nature of the web. Having numerous broken links, however, may point out that the site is not being cared for or updated. A site that is being neglected by the author or sponsor is probably not a good site to include in research.