

Websites

5.3

Checklist and lesson framework to support schools in addressing the question, 'How can we become critical evaluators of online materials?'

The following is based on the checklist for teachers suggested in the Warwick Report (pp.87–8).

Authenticity/credibility

- From where does the site originate?
- Can you identify the organisation that supports the site?
- Is this a religious/non-religious organisation?
- Does this have an impact on the content?
- Is the site biased? How do you know?
- Does it support a particular religious, spiritual or ethical position?
- Is it clear who produced the material (e.g. in an 'About Us' section)?
- Can you contact them should you want to?
- What is the academic credibility of the site?
- Does it attribute sources?
- Does it cite evidence?
- Does it include a bibliography/webography?
- When was the site last updated? Does this matter?
- Is the site, including any advertising that appears on it, acceptable in terms of gender, creed, race, sexuality, age and values?

Websites

5.3 (Continued)

Framework for a secondary school lesson

Ideally, this lesson should take place in a computer room or with pupils having access to internet-enabled devices (e.g. laptops, handhelds).

Be aware of the technical needs of the sites to be looked at and check either on the equipment to be used or with the IT Co-ordinator so that there are no accessibility or technical problems. Is the structure of the whole site clear and easy to understand?

Starter

Discuss with the pupils the meaning of key words such as:
bias, point of view, evidence, referencing, citation, prejudice, partiality, impartiality

Activity 1

Look at one of the sites in the list below as a whole class and consider the site in light of the key words:

- www.martinlutherking.org
- www.biblebelievers.org.au/wasthere.htm

Activity 2

Watch the Teachers TV 15-minute programme <http://teachers.tv/videos/5425> and get the pupils to consider the sites they have just looked at in context of this.

Activity 3

Get the pupils to use the authenticity/credibility checklist to look at a site which has been used for RE lessons.

Plenary

In the light of the above activities, discuss:

- the problems and opportunities that web resources present
- the skills that pupils need in order to be 'critical evaluators' when using online materials.