

OOMROOM WEBSITE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

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oomRoom Website Evaluation Procedure

Objective

To provide recommendations for websites with useful information for teachers and students involved in Ukrainian language learning. To be recommended for student use, a website must be

- A good resource
- Safe
- Technically acceptable

A website may be recommended for teacher use if all of the criteria within the Safety and Technical categories are not satisfied.

Process

Before a website is placed in the oomRoom resource database, it undergoes an evaluation process which will determine if it is a good resource, if it is safe, and if it meets technical criteria. This determination is made by answering the evaluation questions listed below. For ease of use, these questions have been formatted into 2 tables for a website reviewer to use.

The tables, as well as a simple flowchart of the evaluation process are found on the following pages.

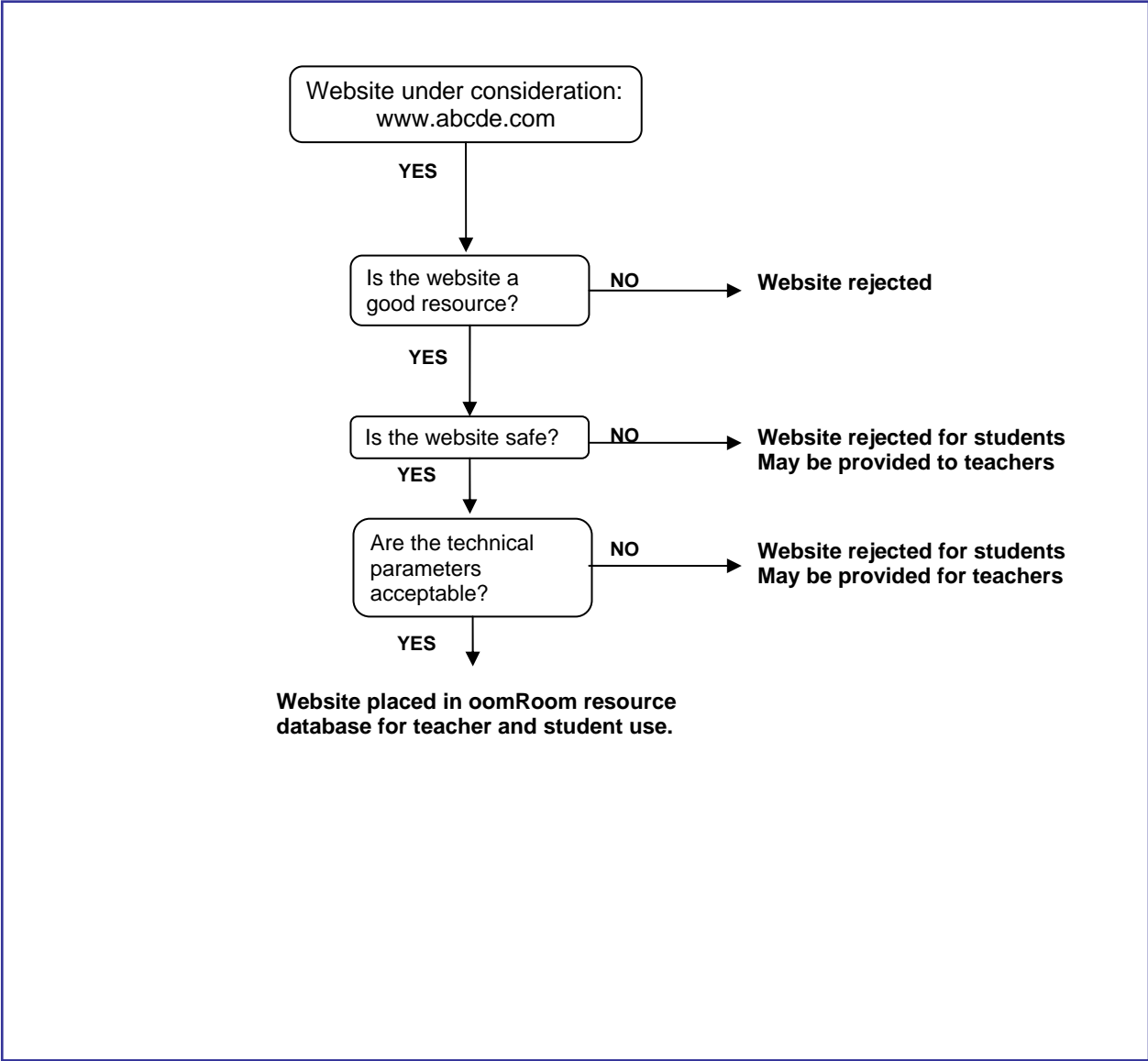
Evaluation Questions

1. Is the website a good resource?
 - Content
 - is any content inappropriate?
 - Is content accurate
 - Is the content current
 - Is the content presented objectively
 - Is there any bias or stereotyping
 - Description of content
 - Stated Audience
 - Subject
 - Granularity (object, lesson, unit, ...)
 - Does it satisfy an expressed teacher's need
 - What learning outcomes can it be used to address
 - Methods of use
 - Assessment
 - Ukrainian Language use
 - grammatically correct
 - level of difficulty
 - User Interface
 - Graphics & audio - Do illustrations, video, or audio add value to the site?
 - Organization & Navigation - is it easy to move around and locate information on the site?
 - Consistency – does everything work in the same way throughout the site?
2. If website is a good resource, is it safe?
 - Links – do any links lead to inappropriate sites?
 - Chat rooms – what type, content specific, monitored or not
 - Advertising – ok for adults, not for students
3. If the website is a good resource and safe, are its technical parameters acceptable?
 - How stable is the connection to the site (can you always access the site or is it often down)?
 - Are technical notices clearly and visibly stated (e.g.high bandwidth connected needed)?
 - How well is the site maintained?
 - When was the site last updated?
 - Functionality – does everything, including links to other sites, work?

- Does the site require additional software or hardware and is it available for download?

Supplementary Information

There are many considerations in website evaluation and it can be a complex process. Additional information that a reviewer may wish to consider is included in Appendix A.



Website Evaluation Flowchart

Table 1 - Website Information

Website url	
Author/owner (individual or organization)	
Description of content	
Stated Audience	
Subject	
Granularity – unstructured information, lesson, unit	
Does it satisfy an expressed teacher’s need	
Can it be used to address learning outcomes? Which ones?	
Methods of use	
Assessment methods	

Table 2 - Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Yes or No	Detailed Explanation (as required)	Guideline
RESOURCE			
Content			
▪ Is any content inappropriate			If Yes, site is rejected.
▪ Is content accurate			If No, site is rejected.
▪ Is content presented objectively			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
▪ Is there any bias or stereotyping			If Yes, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
Ukrainian Language Use			
▪ Language level – beginner, intermediate, advanced?			
▪ Appropriate for audience?			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
▪ Grammatically correct?			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
User Interface			
▪ Graphics & audio – add value?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ Organization & navigation – clear?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ Consistency			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
SAFETY			
▪ Links – appropriate?			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
▪ Chat Rooms – content specific, monitored?			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
▪ Advertising			If No, site is rejected for students. May be provided to teachers with warning.
TECHNICAL			
▪ Stability of site			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ Technical notices as required?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ Is site well maintained?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ When was site last updated?			
▪ Does everything work?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.
▪ If plug ins required, are they available for download?			Site is not rejected for No, but provided with warning.

APPENDIX A – SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

General Background

An enormous amount of information is currently available on the Internet and it continues to grow at an increasing rate. The reasons behind this rapid growth include

- ease of access (if you don't have your own internet connection, many public ones are available),
- low cost of access (some type of website hosting is included with most ISP accounts),
- ease of website creation (templates and graphical tools are widely available).

However, there are no standards with which either website architecture, content, or content management must comply. As a result, the quality of many websites is low (visual appeal, navigation, consistency, functionality) and the information on those sites may not be accurate. In addition, websites are not stable. A website may exist at a specific web address today, but may not be there tomorrow. Even if the website can always reliably be found, the information it contains may change without notice and old information may not be archived. Also, a high quality website may contain links to inferior sites. Despite all of these problems, good sites containing good information do exist.

This situation creates a dilemma for individuals and organizations who wish to search for accurate and reliable information on the Internet. The issue is compounded when someone wishes to recommend a website to other users and be certain that the recommendation is valid. When an organization has such a mandate, particular care must be taken in the evaluation of a website before it can be recommended and the evaluation criteria used must be clear and known.

oomRoom Mandate

The goal of the oomRoom website is to provide students, teachers, and parents with resources and tools for learning the Ukrainian language and culture. For oomRoom purposes, the definition of a resource is quite broad. Resources vary from objects that meet all of the requirements of a learning object (content, audience, learning outcome, method) to items of very small granularity such as an image, some text, or an audio file that can be used to enhance the learning experience.

Currently, few digital learning objects addressing the Ukrainian language exist. A larger amount of small granularity resources that could be useful in the classroom are available. Searching for such resources can take a lot of time, however, and many teachers do not have the time to spend on such tasks. As a value added service, oomRoom would like to provide teachers with addresses of websites which may contain useful information for the language learning classroom.

In the process of recommending websites for teachers, oomRoom can evaluate each website according to specific criteria. However, the final decision as to whether a website contains accurate information and can be used in whole or in part in the classroom remains with each teacher.

When recommending websites for use by students, potentially stricter evaluation criteria must be used.

oomRoom – Third Party Website Evaluation Criteria

The UKiP Editorial Board will evaluate third party websites proposed for inclusion in the 'Website Links' section of the oomRoom website according to the criteria described below.

However, oomRoom and UKiP offer no guarantee or warranty regarding third party sites. These links are presented in an attempt to provide useful information to oomRoom users. The final evaluation must always rest with the end user.

Classes of Recommendation

So as not to exclude websites that may not meet technical criteria, but do have valid and useful information, oomRoom proposes to have 2 classes of website recommendations. Class 1 will be recommendations for teachers and parents and may include sites that are suboptimal. Class 2 will be sites for students and will be evaluated more strictly.

Underlying Evaluation Principle

Information presented on websites should be evaluated in a manner similar to the evaluation of print resources, with additional considerations due to technical concerns. The following items need to be considered (adapted from Saskatchewan Learning - www.sasked.gov.sk.ca).

Authorship

By identifying authors and hosts of a website, their level of expertise, their bias, and their site (in the context of their other writing) can be assessed.

Accuracy

Users need to be assured that their sources are free from error, authoritative, thoroughly researched, and follow appropriate norms of writing.

Currency

One of the most valued characteristics of the Internet is its currency. Users expect Internet home pages to contain current information in frequently updated home pages.

Objectivity

Every website is created for a specific purpose and audience. Users should ensure that they identify the author's purpose. They should also analyze how the author's point of view is presented.

Coverage

The value of a site is usually determined by the topics presented, the depth in which those topics are explored, and the number of options for interaction.

Technical Features

Sites should be easily loaded, contain adequate links, and provide clear directions. Users should be aware that slow loads are often caused by high volumes of net traffic.

Aesthetic Appeal

An engaging site is easily read with well-designed graphics, and, when appropriate, sound and visuals.

Summary Checklist for Evaluating Websites

- Who is the author/source?
- What are the author's reputation and qualifications in the subject covered?
- Is the information on the site accurate?
- Is the information presented in an objective, balanced manner?
- How does the site compare with other sites on the same subject?
- Does the site contribute something unique on the subject?
- Is the material on the site covered adequately?
- How current is the information?
- Is the site appropriate for the intended audience?
- Is the information well-written?
- How stable is the connection to the site?
- How well is the site maintained?
- Does the site tell you when it was last updated?
- If there are links to other sites, do they work?
- Is it easy to move around and locate information on the site?
- Does the site require additional software or hardware?
- Do illustrations, video, or audio add value to the site?

oomRoom 3rd Party Website Evaluation Form

Date evaluated:

Website Title	
URL	
Website Author (may be Organization)	
Intended Audience	Teachers
Subject(s)	
Short Description	
General Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ relevant to the curriculum and consistent with its philosophy ▪ fair, equitable, and free from bias – presented in an objective and balanced manner ▪ gender equitable ▪ appropriate for the general age and maturity level of the audience ▪ created by qualified developers (e.g., authors, editors, producers, publishers) ▪ content is current, accurate, and authentic ▪ appealing to the intended audience ▪ well organized and easily used ▪ high literary, physical, and technical quality ▪ free of intrusive advertising. 	
Authorship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the home page list the author's position and affiliation? ▪ Is the website's sponsorship or publisher identified (either by text or logo)? ▪ Does the home page provide a link to the goals of the organization? ▪ Is the Webmaster identified? ▪ Can the user access the Webmaster from the document? ▪ If the material is covered by copyright, is the copyright holder identified? ▪ Can the host be verified? (Use programs such as "whois".) ▪ Is the document on the same host as the publisher? (Check the URL.) ▪ Based on the above information, can the publisher's (host's) bias be predicted? ▪ Does the organization have a known agenda? 	

<p>Accuracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the information free from error? ▪ Are there internal inconsistencies in format or information? ▪ Are there spelling, grammatical, typographical, or mathematical errors? ▪ Does the site list an editor? ▪ Does the work contain documentation that recognizes sources? ▪ Can these sources be easily accessed to verify the facts? ▪ Is there a bibliography? ▪ Does the information contradict facts already gathered? 	
<p>Currency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the publication date provided? ▪ Does the home page state when the site was last updated? ▪ Is the content of the site up-to-date? ▪ Does the document state when statistics were gathered? 	
<p>Objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the objective or mission of the site indicated? ▪ Is the point of view balanced? ▪ Does the author acknowledge controversy surrounding issues? ▪ Does the author present both sides of issues, or discuss the advantages and disadvantages of techniques? ▪ What strategies is the author using to sway the opinion of the audience? ▪ Does the site contain advertising? ▪ Is the advertising intrusive? ▪ Is the advertising clearly separated from the main text? ▪ Does the site include text or visuals that contain biases or stereotypes? 	
<p>Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do the topics adequately address the topic? ▪ Are there topics that need to be included? ▪ Is each topic explored in sufficient depth? ▪ Does the site contain rich information in a well-written style? ▪ How does the coverage compare with that in other sites? ▪ Do visuals or sound add to the ease or depth of understanding? ▪ Does the site include options for interaction? ▪ Does the site contain a FAQ area? ▪ Does the site include a Chat area (real time) or Ask the Expert (e-mail)? ▪ Is the site's content suitable for its intended use? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does it contain problematic content (language or visuals)? ▪ Are topics or issues dealt with in a manner appropriate to the intended use? 	
<p>Aesthetic Appeal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the home page contain a table of contents, index, or other organizer? ▪ Are there appropriate links to glossaries, definitions, indices, etc.? ▪ Do illustrations, video, or audio add value to the site? ▪ Are the illustrations, video, or audio clear and appropriate? ▪ Do the illustrations, video, or audio justify the added loading time? ▪ Are there headings and subheadings on pages? ▪ Is the font legible? ▪ Are the font and background colour and style appropriate for the type of site? ▪ Can each page be read without excessive scrolling? 	
<p>Technical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How stable is the connection to the site? ▪ How well is the site maintained? ▪ Is it easy to move around and locate information on the site? ▪ How long does it take for visuals or sound to load? ▪ Are the illustrations, video, or audio in a standard format readable with the browser? ▪ Are thumbnail graphics used? ▪ Are the visuals required to understand the information posted on the site or could the site be viewed with images off? ▪ Does the site require additional software or plug-ins for audio, video, graphics, etc. (Java, Acrobat Reader)? ▪ If so, are these applications available for downloading on the site? ▪ Does the site contain search features (internal, global search engine)? ▪ Does the site include a text alternative to graphics? ▪ Is the site interactive? ▪ Does the site give directions for interaction? ▪ Is information given clearly for writing the author or submitting to the site? ▪ Do all links work? ▪ Are links text-based (underline as a Browser setting) or graphic (buttons, maps)? ▪ Are links clearly labeled? ▪ Does the site have explanatory titles on pages (in the Browser title bar at the top)? 	