Usability, as discussed in "Health Information on the Web: What's Good and What's Good For You," (p. 3) is a collection of concepts related to how well a Web site works for the user, regardless of the quality of the content. The usability concepts that are the focus of the WebEval Form include graphics; whether you can find your way around the site easily (navigation); if the pages download quickly (speed); if the links work; or if you have to register or pay to get what you want (access).

There is also a recommendation that you check the site in the Bobby usability tool mentioned in several places in the book, particularly chapter 1 of this volume (p. 13). If you have never used Bobby before, it may seem a little confusing at first. When Bobby checks a Web page, it displays a copy of the Web page, marked with question mark symbols and little police hats. You can pretty much ignore that part. The copy of the page is followed by an image that tells you if the page is Bobby-approved, or not. This is the most important part to notice. If a page is not Bobby-approved, the Bobby logo will be followed by lists of the types of errors or problems. These will be in three groups: type 1 errors, type 2 errors, and type 3 errors. These indicate how serious the error is, with type 1 errors being the most serious. To answer the questions on the WebEval form, you do not need to read anything except the first line of each section. This will tell you the number of errors Bobby found of each type and how many times each error appeared on the page. The WebEval form asks how many types of errors were found—how many type 1 errors, how many type 2, and so forth—not how many times the errors appeared.

SECT Form (Internet Searching Worksheet)

If you are looking for an answer in the clinical professional health *literature*, you will probably want to use Medline. Medline will give you citations for articles in journals. If you want an immediate answer, the concept is new, or the question is not well represented in the periodical literature (i.e., appears in textbooks), the Internet may be a useful source. Here are some search engines we have used for finding health information on the Internet.

Search Engine Selection: *(Select a search engine and try your search strategy.)*

- If the question is simple and common, then browse a major general health resource, or search in a health-specific search engine.
- If the question is complex and common, then search two to three of the concepts as single words or phrases in a moderate to large general search engine. If this doesn't work, then vary terms for the concepts.
- If the question is simple and rare or technical, then use a two-part strategy. First, search the most specific or technical term in a large general search engine. Second, locate a specialized source on that topic, then repeat the search within the topic resource.
- If the question is complex and rare or technical, then use a three-part strategy. Attempt both parts of the strategy for a rare/technical question of the simple type. Also search for an expert with whom you may need to consult.

General Search Engines

Largest	AlltheWeb	Altavista	Google	Overture	Teoma
Medium	Dogpile	Excite	Lycos	MSN Search	Northern Light
Small	Ask Jeeves	Hotbot	Kartoo	WiseNut	Yahoo
Browsing	Galaxy	LookSmart	Open Directory	Yahoo	
Multi-engine	Dogpile	Excite	MetaCrawler	MetaFind	WebCrawler
Searches	EZ2WWW	Kartoo	Mamma	SurfWax	Vivisimo

Health Search Engines

Searching	Achoo	HealthAtoZ	VitalSeek		
Browsing	BIOME/OMNI	Biosites	Health Care on the Internet	healthfinder	HealthWeb
Special	HON	Intelihealth	MedlinePlus	NOAH	WebMD
	ACOR	Cancer.gov	ClinicalTrials.gov	Diseases Explained	KidsHealth
	MAUDE	MedHelp Int'l	Medem	NewsRX	NORD
Content	Oxygen	RXList	Veritas Medicine	Virtual Naval Hospital	
	BBC: Health	CDC Health Topics A to Z	Complete Home Medical Guide	Family Doctor	MayoClinic
	MDchoice	Merck's	Netwellness	PraxisMD	Virtual Hospital
Other	CAPHIS	HardinMD			

You may find it helpful in enriching your searching skills to track your successful and unsuccessful efforts by what search engine was used and what terms were used. The table below can be used for this purpose. You may continue on another sheet if desired.

Search Engine Used (#)   Concepts Used

#	Concept 1*: Term(s) Used	Concept 2: Term(s) Used	Concept 3: Term(s) Used

* Concept 1 refers to the concepts and groups of terms you developed in the FRIAR part of the form.

Evaluate: *(Is what you found related to your topic? Is it good?)*

Evaluate your search results. After you evaluate your search results, you may choose to rework your strategy or redo your search. Always try *first* to use new terms for your concepts. If that doesn't work, after a few tries, the second step is to change your search engine. To evaluate, you may wish to use "Consumer Health Web Site Evaluation Checklist" in this same section, or this quick evaluation tool*.

	Concept	Definition
+/-	Candor	They tell you the whole truth.
+/-	Honesty	They tell you nothing but the truth.
+/-	Quality	The information is accurate, up to date, and easy to understand.
+/-	Informed consent	They do not keep information about you without your permission.
+/-	Privacy	They protect any information you allow them to keep.
+/-	Professionalism	They tell you their limitations and ethical responsibilities.
+/-	Responsible partnering	They disclose influences, sources of information or funding, and choose all of these to foster trust.
+/-	Accountability	They say who they are, why they do this, and how to reach them.

* Based on the work and thought of Dr. Ahmad Risk.

Cite/Copy:

Be sure to document or keep copies of the sites you choose. Many people keep a notebook in which they organize question and answers. You may also keep a bibliography (Webliography). Citation formats for electronic resources are different than those for print resources. You should consult a resource showing how to do this, such as <http://www.ipl.org/ref/QUE/FARQ/netcite-FARQ.html>.

Test It, Try it Out, Talk it Out:

Make your decision or note what questions have been raised. Make a note of what your decision was, and why. You may use this to communicate your reasoning to your health care team.

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SECT = Search, Evaluate, Cite/Copy, Test/Talk
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