

Alfonso Way Jr

ENG 3204

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### Website Evaluation Project

Professor Chris Witcombe of Sweet Briar College has put together an impressive compendium of all the world's art history into one website entitled *Art History: Resources on the Web*. While this website contains a vast amount of information, essays, pictures and links to libraries and museums, I will primarily be focusing on the section entitled Middle Ages: General at: <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHmedieval.html#general>. My review will be based on the section's authority, currency, content, organization and navigation.

The section as well as the entire website's authority is reliable. Witcombe, a PhD graduate of Bryn Mawr College, is highly regarded figure in the field of art history. His education, published works and awards can be found on the site home page at: <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHLinks.html>. His e-mail and job address along with the most current update (August 25, 2004) can be found on the home page and all of the site indexes. Witcombe personally maintains and updates the site for all of his students and viewers on the Internet.

The majority of the links within Middle Ages: General section (as well as other time periods) lead to excerpts from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This takes away a bit of his credibility as an art expert as the descriptions of artifacts and manuscripts beheld by viewers are not his own. They are however up to date. Initially after browsing a bit, one comes to discover that Witcombe has merely compiled all this information

from outside art history authorities and put himself completely out the of loop. While he does in fact give credit to his various sources he's used to construct the site, he leaves it without any room for his own commentary or analysis on the subject.

The website in general looks impressively organized, but this section in particular is flawed by its packed string of links. They are knit entirely too close together. The navigation is simple enough, but can prove a bit distressful. Since the links are made up from completely different sources, they leave no way for one to get back to the home page or site index (with the exception of an ISP's 'Back' option). With this in mind, Witcombe might want to reconsider putting his own two cents in every once and a while so as to benefit the navigation of his site. However, he should be proud that he's created a website that contains such rich resources for both students and scholars to use.