

Website Evaluation

This evaluation will first examine The Geoffrey Chaucer Website Homepage (<http://icg.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/>) based on its author, location, currency and general purpose. After the site's authenticity is determined, the evaluation will then analyze how useful and relevant its content is.

One should immediately notice that the site's address contains the tag 'edu' indicating that it is an educational/non-profit website (thus the website has no advertising links). Furthermore, the site is maintained by Harvard University, which has a prestigious academic reputation.

Regrettably, the site does not list the individual authors of the various information provided in the composite pages; however, the site's stated purpose is to "[provide] materials for Harvard University's Chaucer classes in the Core Program, the English Department, and the Division of Continuing Education." Thus one would assume it was produced by Harvard academics in the English department. But as it does not list the individual authors, there is no way to determinedly verify the authors' credentials.

The site was last modified on August 11, 2004, indicating that its information is current. All links work and no grammatical errors were observed.

All of this information reasonably assures one of the site's authority; now the content will be analyzed. The website contains many valuable resources. There is a short biography entitled "Life of Chaucer" and a more detailed timeline – containing not only information about Chaucer's life and literary work, but also information regarding

the social, political and religious events which affected his work – on the “Chronology” page. Under the page entitled “Life and Manners” there is more extensive information about historical events relevant to Chaucer.

The page entitled “Canterbury Tales” provides much of the text from Chaucer’s most famous literary work broken down into fragments and then into individual prologues and tales.

Three composite pages offer resources to assist students in learning Middle English. The most useful page, “Chaucer’s Middle English,” provides tutorials accompanied by audio guides.

The “Bibliography” page only contains links to other websites with extensive Chaucer bibliographies. As the many bibliographies accessible from this page don’t contain source information, their listings need not be evaluated for authenticity.

Other pages include information about motifs in Chaucer’s literature (“Literary Subjects,” “Courtly Love,” and “Pilgrimage”) as well as information about influencing and contemporary writers from Chaucer’s time (“Other Authors”). There is also a section entitled “Medieval Science” which, although incomplete, explores elements of astrology and astronomy in Chaucer’s time.

Overall, the site contains many valuable resources for anyone studying Chaucer and his work. It has been recently updated, is free of errors and was created for non-profit purposes. All of these elements strengthen its legitimacy as a truly educational website. Although its authors are not individually listed, it was created and is maintained by Harvard University’s English department which gives it authority on the subject.