

Evaluating Information-Websites

Library HOW-Tos: Evaluating Information-Websites

Anybody can put up a website. So, when doing academic research, it is best to use a database to retrieve quality, credible, scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles for credible information rather than free websites data.

Unless you are **very good at evaluating data, use a database for scholarly research! (Always check with your professor if you have questions on what sources are required.)**

CSU Chico was an early pioneer of the CRAAP guidelines, however many are using it now because it works!

The CRAAP Test is a useful guide to evaluating resources.

CRAAP is an acronym for the categories of criteria that can be used to evaluate information by

CURRENCY, RELEVANCE, AUTHORITY, ACCURACY, AND PURPOSE.

These guidelines were modified from the Gettysburg College Musselman Library August 2015

	CRAPP Test Ask Yourself...
Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When was the information published or last updated?• Have newer articles been published on this topic?• Are links or references to other sources up to date?• Is the site updated regularly or is it outdated and not maintained?• Is your topic in an area that changed rapidly, like technology or pop culture?
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the information answer your research question?• Does the author display a clear bias on the topic?• Does the information meet the stated requirements of the assignment?• Is the information too technical or too simplified for you to use?• Does the source add something new to your knowledge of the topic?
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the author's credentials?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or well known and trusted organization? • Can you find information about the author from reference sources or the Internet? • Do other books or authors cite the author? • Consider what biases the author may have? Is this a conflict? • If you do not see an author or cannot find a way to contact them or find more information about them, please, be wary.
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there statements you know to be false? • Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar? • Was the information reviewed by editors or subject experts before it was published? (Peer reviewed) • What citations or references support the author's claims? • What do other people have to say about the topic? • Is the writing coherent? Understandable and make sense?
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author's purpose to sell, persuade, entertain, or inform? • Is there an obvious bias or prejudice? • Are alternative points of view presented? • Does the author ignore important facts or data that might disprove the claim they are asserting? • Does the author use strong or emotional language? • If it is a website, is it: .com, .gov, .org. or .edu? What does this mean to your research? Can it be trusted or is there an agenda?

- Many websites are available to you freely and easily, however some may be incredibly bias, out of date, or just plain wrong!
- Please be careful with what information you use. The above will give you guidelines to assist you determine if the information you found, especially online, is credible and valid.

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Other tips!

- If this is a website, it should be affiliated with a trusted source or institution (look at the url! .com {commercial}, .org {organization}, .gov {government site}, .edu {educational institution} (.edu and .gov are the usually the most credible. Beware! even .org (organizations) have agendas, so be careful and evaluate the information!
- ASK YOURSELF: What is the source? Who is hosting the site? Is the site kept current - meaning, no broken/dead links, etc.? Is there contact information for the author? What is the author's affiliation? Are there any affiliations to any institutions or other? Can you easily see an update date?
- Back track on the url (meaning, start at the end and delete part of the url until you find the "host")
- If you have doubts, do not use the information or consult your professor or a librarian!
- Use a database for scholarly research