Evaluating Information Sources

the CRAAP way

When you search for information you find LOTS of it, but is it credible information? You will have to determine that yourself before you use it in your assignments. The CRAAP Test can help; it is a list of questions to help you evaluate the information you find. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your needs and the format of the information.

Currency - the timeliness of the information

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been reviewed or updated?
- Are the links current and functional if it is a website?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older resources work as well?

Relevance - the importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Is the information at an appropriate level—not too basic or too advanced for your needs? Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information unique? Or can you find it in a scholarly book or article rather than a website?

Authority - the source of the information

- Who is the author / publisher / source / sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organisational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the sources, e.g. .com, .edu, .gov, .au?

Accuracy - the reliability and truthfulness of the information

- Is it clear where the information comes from?
- Is the information supported by evidence? Has the author cited any sources?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Is the spelling and grammar of a good standard?

Purpose - the reason why the resource was created

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform or teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Does the author make their intentions or purpose clear? Or is there a hidden agenda and evidence of bias?

Adapted from http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf

Apply the CRAAP test to one of your resources:

Currency (When was the work published, is it out of date for the topic?)

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Relevance (Is it a detailed analysis, what is the readership level?)

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Authority (Who are the authors and their credentials, it is peer reviewed?)

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Accuracy (Can you verify the source; are lots of other sources used in the bibliography?)

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Purpose (Is there bias in the work, is there a particular perspective?)

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