

Criteria for Evaluating Sources

When you search for information, you're going to find lots of it . . . but is it good information? You will have to determine that for yourself, and the **CRAP Test** can help. The CRAP Test is a list of questions to help you evaluate the information you find. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your situation or need.

Currency: The timeliness of the information.

- Is your information current enough for your research?
- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
- Are online links functional?

Reliability: The truthfulness and correctness of the content.

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or referred?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

Authority: The source of the information.

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic? Are they experts?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
Examples: .com .edu .gov .net

Purpose: The reason the information exists.

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?