

Evaluating Sources - The C.R.A.A.P. Test

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 C.R.A.A.P. Test¹ can help. The C.R.A.A.P. Test is a list of questions to help you evaluate what you find. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your situation or need.

Key: ○ indicates criteria is for Web

Currency: The timeliness of the information.

- 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 the links functional and up-to-date?

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs.

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e., not too elementary or advanced)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

Authority: The source of the information.

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Who is hosting or sponsoring the website?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
examples: .com (*commercial*), .edu (*educational*), .gov (*U.S. government*),
.org (*non-profit organization*), .net (*network*)

¹ Note: The C.R.A.A.P. test was developed by librarians at CSU Chico.

Accuracy: The reliability and correctness of the content.

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- 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?

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?