

Evaluating Information

Whenever you come across information, in print or online, you need to evaluate its credibility. The “CRAAP” test is a simple tool you can use to separate good information from not-so-good information. Ask yourself the questions below as you analyze your information source. The more you are able to answer YES to these questions, the more likely it is a credible source.

Currency- The timeliness of the information.

- Can you find a date the information was published or posted?
- Is the information too dated?

Relevance – The usefulness of the information.

- Does this relate to your topic?
- Does it help you answer your research question?
- Does it provide background, flavor, or evidentiary information?
- Can it help you find other information related to your question or topic?
- Is the information at the appropriate level for your audience?

Authority – The source of the information.

- Are you able to determine who published or posted this information?
- Is the author or organization qualified to speak on this subject?
- Can you determine the author’s credentials and or affiliation?
- Is there contact information such as a publisher or email address?

Accuracy – The correctness and reliability of the information.

- Are the facts listed corroborated by other sources?
- Does the author acknowledge other perspectives or differing opinions?
- Are arguments supported with evidence?
- Can the information be verified in some way?

Purpose – The reason for the information.

- Is the author free from a conflict of interest that would bias what she or he has to say? (i.e. they work for the drug company that produces the drug they are reporting on; they have stock in the product they are testing, etc.)
- Are the author’s motives clearly stated? (Is it an opinion piece? Political message? Product advertisement?)
- Does the information seem to be free from bias?