

Evaluating the Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose (CRAAP Test) of the information you find is a crucial and necessary step in your library research. The questions in this guide should help you determine whether a particular source is a good fit for your research.

Always be critical. Can you defend the CRAAP of the resource?

C	CURRENCY	Timeliness of the information.
R	RELEVANCE	Importance of the information for your research needs.
A	AUTHORITY	Source of the information.
A	ACCURACY	Reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content.
P	PURPOSE	Reason the information exists.

CURRENCY

In some disciplines, research may be occurring more often and published more recently. In other disciplines, older research is acceptable and even required. Sometimes you need older sources for historical background.

- When was the source published?
- How current is the source?
- How timely is the information?
- Is it recent and up-to-date or old and obsolete?
- If the source is a website, was it updated recently? Do the links work properly?
- On a website, look for the date of the last revision.

RELEVANCE

Knowing the intended audience of your resource can help determine its appropriateness for your research. If the intended audience is the general public, it may not be sufficient for your academic research needs.

- How relevant is the information?
- Does it directly relate to your topic or is it out of context?
- Is the content relevant to your research?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the research directed to other scholars, specialists, and professionals?
- Or is the information intended for the general public?
- Is the information too basic or too advanced?
- Does it appropriately address the target audience?

AUTHORITY

An authoritative source will provide informative details about the author. A reputable publisher does not guarantee high-quality information, but it does show that the source is held in high regard.

- Who is the author or publisher?
- Is there an email or contact information?
- Is the author an expert in the subject matter?
- What are the author's credentials, institutional affiliation, educational background?
- Have you seen the author's name or work cited in other research?
- Have this author been recommended by faculty or colleagues?
- Is the publisher from a university press?
- When visiting a website, look for the "About Us" page for more info.

ACCURACY

- Are the facts accurate?
- How verifiable is this information?
- Do other researchers in the field agree or disagree with the data?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been peer reviewed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?
- Do you notice any errors of grammar or spelling or facts?

PURPOSE

Be cautious of a source if it is trying to sell a product or service. There still may be some relevance but use a more critical eye.

- What is the purpose or motivation of the information?
- Why was the article written? Or, why was the webpage created?
- Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain, or persuade?
- Does it support scholarly research?
- Or are they intending to make a profit and/or promote propaganda?
- Is the information biased?
- Is there a conflict of interest?
- What point of view does the author represent? Documents that do not go through any editorial process or peer review may be more prone to bias.
- Is the author trying to argue a position?
- Does the research in support of the argument seem comprehensive?
- Are there references to credible sources?
- Is the document or website published by a company or organization that advocates a certain philosophy or has a particular editorial position?

EXAMPLES OF BOGUS WEBSITES

- [Burmese Mountain Dog](#) - Shows pictures of German Shepherds. There is no breed of dog called Burmese. The correct breed is called Bernese Mountain Dog.
- [DHMO.org](#) - Dihydrogen Monoxide is simply water! It is not lethal.
- [All About Explorers](#) - At first glance, it may look like a promising website, but Christopher Columbus was not born in Sydney, Australia in 1951!

The top-level domain of a website is an indicator of who published the site.

.gov - Government

To inform, to post public documents, and to present research findings or statistics. Viewed as a credible source.

.edu - Education

To teach, inform, or present research. Usually credible. Be mindful that some faculty and students may publish on .edu.

.org - Organization

Traditionally a non-profit organization. Typically considered credible, but be aware some organizations may be biased or trying to advocate specific points of view.

.com - Commercial

Usually to sell or promote a company, product or service. May still be credible but review authority and accuracy closely.

For further assistance, contact the Bryan Librarian at: library@bryanuniversity.edu or 602.838.7312.