EVALUATING INTERNET SOURCES

One way to determine whether a source is appropriate to your needs is to apply the CRAAP test.

Currency: timeliness

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?
- Are the links functional?

Relevance: importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your questions?
- Does it present a sub-topic or a different aspect of your topic?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use? (i.e. not settle for something but get the most pertinent sources)

Authority: the source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author’s qualifications to write on the topic?
- 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 .org .net .ca

Accuracy: the reliability and correctness of the informational content

- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Is the evidence anecdotal or is it the result of scientific study or research?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Is a bibliography/list of sources consulted included?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the author write from an insider/s/outside/s perspective? How does this affect what is included/excluded from the text/webpage?
- Are any assumptions made by the writer clear to the reader?
- Does the writer’s language, tone or choice of examples appear neutral or one-sided?
- Are there other approaches to the topic? Are there other theoretical or philosophical perspectives?
- Are there spelling, grammar or other typographical errors?
Purpose: *the reason the information exists*

- What is the purpose of the information? To inform? To teach? To sell? To entertain? To persuade?
- Do the authors /sponsor make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? Opinion? Propaganda?
- Does the author’s approach appear impartial or partisan?
- Is the author’s viewpoint political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal? If so, does the writer’s viewpoint reduce his or her credibility?

*Modified from The CRAAP Test by Sarah Blakeslee, California State University, Chico*