Applying the CRAAP Test

The CRAAP 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.
- When was the information published or posted?
- When was the information last revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of-date with regard to your topic?
- If you found the information on the web, are the links functional?

✔️ **Relevance**: The importance of the information for your needs.
- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Is the breadth and depth of the information appropriate for your needs?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced) for your needs?
- Could you find the same or better information in another source (for example, a general encyclopedia)?

✔️ **Authority**: The source of the information.
- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Google the author, organization, or sponsor. What information do you find?
- Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given? If so, what are they?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is contact information provided, such as a publisher or email address?

✔️ **Accuracy**: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the informational 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 by looking in another source or using personal knowledge?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

✔️ **Purpose**: The reason the information exists.
- What is the purpose of the information? To inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions, purpose, and any possible biases clear?
- Is any advertising content easily distinguishable from the informational content?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- If you found the information on the web, what does the URL reveal about the author or source? For example, .com indicates a commercial site, .edu indicates an educational site, .gov indicates a government site, and .org indicates a non-profit site.
Start Your Research in 4 Steps

1. Choose a topic.

- **Start broad.**
  Your topic should have a focus but if it's too specific you may not find enough sources.

- **Does your topic interest you?**
  It's hard to research something that puts you to sleep!

- **Form a research question.**
  Posing your topic as a question will help you focus your research and come up with a thesis.

2. Gather background information.

- **Consult reference sources.**
  - Encyclopedias
  - Dictionaries
  - Atlases
  - Directories

- **Explore .gov and .org sites.**

- **Use Google and Wikipedia**

3. Narrow your topic.

- **Consider:**
  - Geography
  - Demographics
  - History
  - Causes/Effects
  - Purpose

4. Brainstorm search terms.

- **Think about your topic and list:**
  - Related words
  - Synonyms
  - Broader terms
  - Narrower terms

Need more help?

Call 580-559-5371
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Chat with us at library.ecok.edu