

Using the CRAAP Test to Evaluate Websites

A lot of information available on the internet is unreliable, inaccurate, and of low quality. The **CRAAP test** provides a list of criteria and questions to help students evaluate online information

Criteria	Questions to Ask	Purpose & Tips
<p>CURRENCY</p> <p><i>(timeliness of the information)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 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 ◆ Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?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 or broken? ◆ When was the page created? 	<p>A recent update does not mean the information is current. The content might still be out of date even if the date given is recent. To determine if information is up-to-date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Compare the information to other sources, such as scholarly articles found in a library database (This is very important for science, technology, business and health where new information is frequently produced) ✚ Test the links to other websites, as broken links that do not work often indicate that a website has not been recently updated
<p>RELEVANCE</p> <p><i>(importance of the information for your needs)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 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 for your needs)? ◆ Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use? How does the site compare with other sites? ◆ Is the site intended to be general, comprehensive or selective? 	<p>To identify the target audience, look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Reading level (is it easy or challenging? Does it assume previous knowledge with the topic?) ✚ Design of the page (are there banner ads, flashy graphics, or plain text?) ✚ Possible target demographics (is the information aimed at academic researchers, kids, consumers, political activists, or another type of person?)
<p>AUTHORITY</p> <p><i>(original source of the information)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Who is the author, publisher, source or sponsor? ◆ Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given? If yes, what are they? ◆ What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic? ◆ Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address? ◆ Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? 	<p>Go to the "About" to learn about the website or organization's purpose.</p> <p>The URL ending, or domain, tells you where the information came from geographically or the type of organization that maintains the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .org: Advocacy site, such as a not-for-profit organization. .com: Business or commercial site. .edu : Site affiliated with a higher education institution .gov: United States government site. .ca: Site originating in Canada .gc.ca: Canadian government site.

<p>ACCURACY</p> <p><i>(reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Where does the information come from? ♦ Is the information supported by evidence? ♦ Has the information been reviewed or refereed? ♦ Can you verify the information in another source or from personal knowledge? ♦ Does the language or tone seem biased or emotional? ♦ Are there obvious errors (spelling, grammar, etc.)? 	<p>Many websites, particularly non-profit organizations or advocacy groups, will have a particular agenda or purpose that results in information with a bias.</p> <p>A bias is not necessarily bad, but it is very important to take it into account when interpreting or using the given information.</p> <p>Consider if the author is fair, balanced or moderate in their presentation or viewpoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Is he or she overly emotional or extreme? ✚ Is there a conflict of interest due to the author's affiliation or perspective?
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p><i>(reason the information exists)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What is the purpose of the information? Does it inform, persuade, sell or entertain? ♦ Are the intentions of the authors/sponsors clear? ♦ Does the point of view appear objective? ♦ Are there political, cultural, institutional, or personal biases? 	<p>Websites may have several purposes, such as to persuade and entertain at the same time.</p> <p>It is important to analyze if one purpose conflicts with the information found on the website.</p> <p>Consider unstated purposes that are found in clues such as the aim of the organization or the use of advertising on the page.</p>

Google Search Trick

Limit results to one type of website, such as governmental or educational, which generally provide information that passes the **CRAAP test**.

Example 1: **healthcare site:.gc.ca**

Typing "**site:.gc.ca**" after the search term will limit results to government of Canada websites that contain the keyword "healthcare"

Example 2: **early childhood education site:.edu**

Typing "**site:.edu**" after the search term will limit results to educational institutions that contain the phrase "early childhood education"