

# C.R.A.P. Test

## Evaluating Research Sources

### Currency

Is the information recent enough for your topic?

- Has it been published in the last  $x$  years? ( $x$  will vary, depending on your topic)
- If you have a historical research topic, was it published around the date of the original event?

### Reliability/Relevance

Where does the information come from, and does the information apply to your topic?

- Is it a primary or secondary source?
- Are methods or references provided?
- Who published the information?
- Was it peer-reviewed?
- Does all of the information apply to your topic, or only part of it?
- Is the information general or detailed?
- Is the information balanced or biased?

### Authority

Who authored this information?

- Was it a single person or several people?
- Was it a corporation or organization?
- Are their credentials provided?
- What is their reputation or expertise?

### Purpose/Point-of-View

What was the intent of the author, and how is the author connected to the information?

- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information intended to inform, persuade, sell, entertain, ...?
- Is this a first-hand account of an event or research?
- Does the author have a vested interest in the topic?

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#### Additional Questions for Online Sources:

- What is the domain (*i.e.* .com, .org, .gov, .edu)?
- Who is the site publisher or sponsor, and is this information easy to find?
- Has it been updated recently?
- Are there any advertisements or other distractions?
- Could the site be ironic, like a satire or a spoof?

# The C.R.A.P. Test

Grade all websites you intend to use for class projects using this rubric.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: <http://> \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Evaluation Techniques	0	1	2	3
<b>Currency</b> When was the information written & last updated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a copyright or last updated date on the page?</li> <li>Are links broken (404 error)?</li> <li>Is it current enough for your topic?</li> </ul>	There is no indication of when the site was created or revised.	The date given for the site's creation is over 3 years old; no date of revision or update.	The site has been created or updated within the last 3 years.	Created or updated less than two years. Sources referenced are current.
<b>Reliability</b> Where did the author get this information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the creator provide links to sources for data or quotations? Do those sources seem reliable?</li> <li>Is the information accurate and error-free?</li> <li>Can the information be corroborated with another source?</li> </ul>	No links to sources or works cited is given.	There is a general statement about the source of the information, but no specific links to sources or a works cited list.	There are links to sources or a works cited list.	There are links to sources or a works cited list. Information is corroborated with another source.
<b>Authority of Author</b> Who is responsible for the information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the author's name listed?</li> <li>Google the author's names to learn more about the author.</li> <li>Can you figure out what makes the author an expert in this area (credentials*, known and respected)?</li> </ul> <p><b>* Credentials = education, work, and/or university faculty in this area, etc.</b></p>	The author is probably a student. Errors indicate the author is not an expert.	The author is unnamed and/or no credentials* are given.	The author is named but credentials* are incomplete.	Credentials* are given and indicate that author is an expert.
<b>Authority of Organization</b> Does the resource have a reputable organization behind it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a reputable organization behind it? What is the organization's interest (if any) in this information?</li> <li>What is the domain (.edu, .com, .org, .net, .uk, .k12, etc)? Is the page hosted by an individual? (look for any of the following in the URL: %, ~, "users", "AOL", or "yahoo")</li> <li>Search who owns the site using a "whois" search engine such as: <a href="http://whois.domaintools.com">http://whois.domaintools.com</a>.</li> <li>Who else links to the site? Google command: "link:rcmchs.net"</li> </ul>	An individual's page hosted by an Internet service provider (Comcast, yahoo, AOL, etc) or a .com site with no affiliation	Any of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The home page is a K12, .com, .org, or unknown.</li> <li>The home page is a student folder on a .edu site.</li> </ul>	A known business, professional association, organization, museum, or university sponsors the home page.	A government department or agency is the home page. OR The domain is .edu and faculty maintains the site.
<b>Purpose/ Point of View:</b> Does the information seem fairly represented, or is it biased?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scan the contents. Why was it written? (ex. information, advice, advocacy, propaganda, opinion, entertainment, commercial site, personal, news)</li> <li>Be able to spot point of view. Is the site fair and objective? Is it an advocacy site? Is the page affiliated with an organization that has a particular political or social agenda?</li> <li>Is there a conflict of interest? Does the web site producer stand to benefit from the information being provided?</li> <li>How important is balance? Is it required for your purposes? Is any bias explicit or hidden? Can you use the information?</li> </ul>	The purpose is personal or too much advertising is distracting.	Purpose is to sell, persuade, or give a biased view. Some factual info. or useful pictures but focus is to promote something.	Offers some factual information. Sides unbalanced; some bias or advertising.	The purpose is to support scholarly research with factual information. Balanced coverage/without bias.

**What does the score mean?**

- 12 to 15 pts Excellent source for research
- 8 to 11 pts Good source for a research paper or academic project. **Confirm with other sources.**
- 4 to 7 pts Useful for ideas or casual projects. Do not cite as a reference for a research paper or project
- 0 to 3 pts Highly questionable source

Total Points =