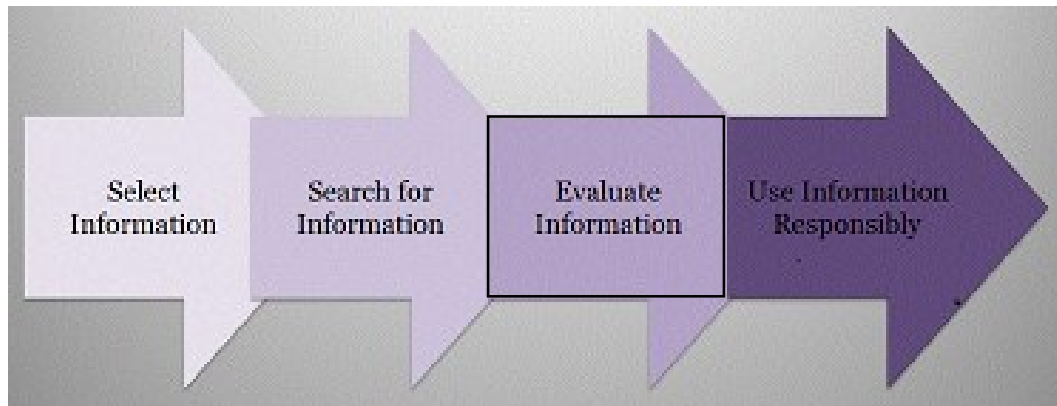


The Research Process: Evaluate Information



After you have searched for and found the information you plan to use to answer your research question or prove your thesis, you need to evaluate it to determine whether it meets your needs and stands up to standard evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria: The CRAAP Test

The *CRAAP Test* was developed by librarians at Merriam Library, California State University Chico. The test divides the evaluation criteria into five sections (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose) and poses questions to guide the researcher.

Some of the questions may be more applicable to online information, so it may be useful to use the criteria as a general guideline. It may also be helpful to assign points to each criterion, and to use the cumulative points to assign an overall score to an information source.

Currency: timeliness of the information

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well? Are the links functional?

Relevance: importance of the information for your needs

- 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?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

Authority: source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified 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

Accuracy: reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the 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 in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

Purpose: reason the information exists

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?