

# Be a Savvy Surfer: Evaluating Websites

Almost anyone can publish information on the Internet, and most websites are not regulated for content accuracy or quality. This means the responsibility falls on you to ensure the information you read is true. Use the guidelines below to help evaluate internet sources!

## Evaluation Criteria (also known as the CRAAP Test)

**C**urrency: the timeliness of the information

- When was the information published or last updated?
- Do your needs require information that is current, or will older information also work?
- Are the links functional?

**R**elevancy: the importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level? Or is it too advanced, or too easy?

**A**uthority: the source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- What are the author's qualifications to write about this topic?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the source?
  - .com = commercial
  - .org = nonprofit organization
  - .edu = educational
  - .gov = governmental

**A**ccuracy: the reliability and correctness of the information

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by the evidence or can you verify the information?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

**P**urpose: the reason the information exists

- What is the reason the information exists? To inform? To teach? To sell? To entertain?
- Does the point of view seem impartial, unbiased and objective?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

**NOTE:** Online databases can be accessed 24 hours a day 7 days a week from the library's webpage, or located here: <http://erec.einetwork.net/>

*Need further assistance? Call the library 412-882-6622, or send email to [slimonl@einetwork.net](mailto:slimonl@einetwork.net)*