Library Quick Guide: Evaluating Websites

For your research to be successful it is critical to choose reliable sources of information. The CRAP test is a way to evaluate Internet sources based on the following criteria: Currency, Reliability/Relevance, Authority, and Purpose/Point of View.

**Currency**
- How recent is the information?
- When was the information last updated?
- Is the information current enough for your topic?

**Reliability/Relevance**
- Is the content of the source primarily fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Is there a bibliography or a list of references?
- Are there links to other websites?
- Does the source contain the information you need?

**Authority/Audience**
- Based on the writing style and vocabulary, who is the intended audience?
- Is the author affiliated with an institution or organization?
- Who wrote the page? Is there evidence that the author or organization is an expert on this subject?
- What is the domain extension? The domain extension is a quick way to identify an authoritative website, or to describe the intended audience of a site.

**Purpose/Point of View**
- Why was the page put on the web?
- Is the information factual or an opinion of the author or website sponsor?
- Is it biased?

http://www.cscce.edu

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Some common extensions include:

.gov (Government) Includes official information from or about the U.S. government. Example: www.whitehouse.gov
.edu (Educational institution) Purpose is to educate or to provide information about an educational institution, such as a college, university or school. Example: www.csc.edu
.org (Organization) Usually a non-profit organization, such as The American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org). Sometimes contains information that promotes a specific point of view.
.com (Commercial) Purpose is to sell goods or services, or to provide information about a company. Example: www.amazon.com
.net (Network) Often, this includes personal web pages or community websites. Example: www.madisonsoftball.net

Sometimes you can limit a search to a specific domain by selecting Advanced Search on the search engine (such as Google.com, Yahoo.com, Ask.com, etc.)

ADDITIONAL SOURCES ABOUT EVALUATING WEBSITES


Questions? Ask a Librarian!
Columbus Campus: Library, Columbus Hall  Reference Desk: 614.287.2460
Delaware Campus: The Learning Center, Moeller Hall  Service Desk: 740.203.8183
http://www.csc.edu/library