# **Evaluating Web** Sources Give them the **CRAAP** Test!



This presentation is based on the **CRAAP** Test developed by the Meriam Library at California State University Chico.

## Why evaluate sources?

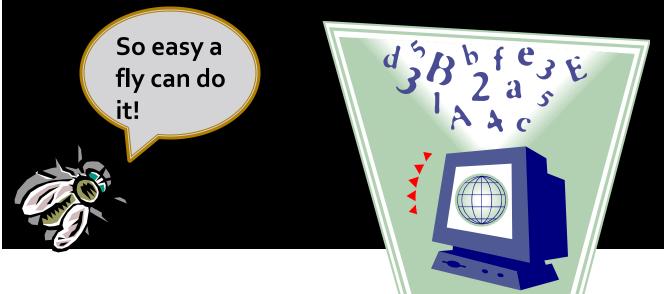
## Just because it's written doesn't mean it's good...

Well, I'm not too picky!





## Today, anyone who has the necessary skills can find a lot of information on almost any topic.





 The challenge is to sift through a huge amount of information and identify sources that are reliable and appropriate.

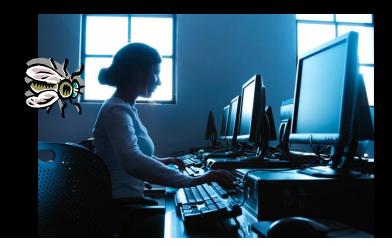




Whether you find information in books and periodicals, on the Internet, or on television you cannot assume it is But can reliable. eat it?



# The researcher is responsible for evaluating information and judging its quality.





# You can use a system called the CRAAP Test to help you evaluate websites.

Now that's my kind of test!



# **CRAAP** Test

• C = Currency• R = Relevance •A = Author• A = Accuracy•  $\mathbf{P} = \mathbf{P}$ urpose

# The CRAAP Test C = Currency

# C = <u>C</u>urrency

# Currency: The timeliness of the web page.

- When was the information gathered?
- When was it posted?
- When was it last revised?







# Currency: The timeliness of the web page.

- Are links functional and up-to-date?
- Is there evidence of newly added information, "updates" or links?



# **C** = <u>**C**urrency</u>

#### How important is Currency?

 In fields such as medicine, science, business, technology, and most social sciences, currency of information <u>is</u> <u>important</u>. (no older than 3 years!)













# Sometimes Currency is not all that important.

 In fields such as history and literature, older materials may be just as valuable as newer ones.









 When evaluating a website, determine whether it is important to use current sources for the subject.



# The CRAAP Test R = Relevance



# Relevance = How effectively the website communicates the information to its intended audience.





HALFWAY THROUGH PHILIPPIANS 2, REVERAND PAUL MATTHEWS REALIZED HE WAS PREACHING TO THE CHOIR.

# R = <u>R</u>elevance



 Who is the intended audience?
 Would this site be of greatest interest to the general user, the enthusiast, or the professional?



# R = <u>R</u>elevance

- What does the website assume about the audience in terms of their knowledge of and familiarity with the topic?
- Does the website take for granted that the audience will believe or buy into the information without any doubt?





#### Is enough information presented for the audience to understand the topic?

#### Is the information unique?



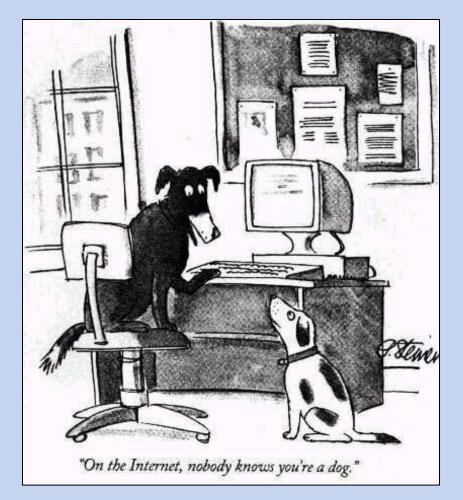
# R = <u>R</u>elevance

- Is the information available elsewhere such as an online news source?
- Could the same information be found in a simpler source, such as an encyclopedia or dictionary?

I wasted all that time on that website when the info was right here! The CRAAP Test A = Authority



#### Websites are not always created by experts!





#### Look at the web address first – the address can tell you lots about the source



#### <u>The address holds information about the author!</u>

- •.edu = college/university
  - •.gov = U.S. government site
  - •.com = commercial site
  - •.org = Organization/group
  - •.mil = U.S. military site
  - •.net = network of computers
  - •.k12.us = public school

The best sites for reliable information are:

- •.edu
- •.gov
- •.mil
- •.k12.us

However, these are not without
 problems...students and professors may
 have personal web pages on the university
 website, so be sure to read them critically.



#### If you cannot find anyone's NAME on the website, that's a big RED FLAG



# Sometimes questionable internet sources do not give the identity or credentials of the author or producer.







# If you have a source with <u>NO NAME</u> or <u>NO</u> <u>CORRESPONDING ORGANIZATION</u>, do not

#### **USe** that source!



Identify the author(s)



A PERSON

An ORGANIZATION











- What are his/her <u>credentials</u>?
- Does he/she have sufficient <u>expertise</u> to speak on the subject?
- Author's occupation / position?
- Author's education?
- Author's affiliation with a known institution or organization?

# An ORGANIZATION



- Who are the **leaders**?
- What is the mission of the organization?
- Is it a national or international institution?
- What is its **membership**?
- Is it <u>endorsed</u> by or affiliated with other organizations?
- Does it have a "parent" organization?

# An ORGANIZATION



 Check the organization's home page to make sure it has a **postal address and phone number available**. If it does not, the site is probably not a credible source.

 Look for any product advertising on the site – ads can reveal what's important to the organization



#### ".org" can be tricky...

 Most organizations have a purpose or mission, and this means they may present a <u>biased</u> view.





### \* ".org" can be tricky...

#### For example:

 The Beef Industry (www.beef.org) is an organization made up of people in the meat industry.



- **The Vegetarian Society** (<u>www.vegsoc.org</u>) is an organization promoting vegetarianism.
- Both are legitimate ".org" sites, but they present
   <u>very different views</u> about meat.

".org" can be tricky... Not all ".org" sites are reliable!
Many helpful organizations and charities with good intentions have ".org" addresses, but <u>some</u> <u>organizations promote prejudice, criminal</u> <u>activity, or harmful behavior</u>.





#### How to verify an author:

- Look at the source to see if it tells you anything about the author's credentials.
- **\*About us** 
  - "About the author"
  - "Author Bio"
  - Mission Statement"
  - "Who we are"



#### A = <u>Authority</u>

## How to verify an author or organization:

- Use a search engine (such as Google or Yahoo) to find information about the author(s)
- Do a "<u>Who is</u>" search at <u>www.whois.net</u> to determine the website's registered domain



The CRAAP Test



#### Accuracy: The <u>reliability</u>, <u>truthfulness</u>, and <u>correctness</u> of the informational content.





"Thanks to the internet it is now possible to be extremely well informed and completely wrong at the same time!"

## A = <u>Accuracy</u>

# Where does the information come from?

- Did the author conduct an experiment?
- Is the author reporting his/her observations?
- Does the site rely on expert testimony?





#### A = <u>Accuracy</u>

# Does the author support his or her statements with <u>data</u> or <u>works cited</u>?

#### Are any original sources of information listed?

#### Works Cited

Individual Songs

Place the names of individual songs in quotation marks. Example:

Nirvana. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Nevermind. Geffen, 1991.

#### An Entire Web Site

Basic format:

- Name of Site. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Date you accessed the site <electronic address>.
- It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Examples:
  - The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 23 April 2006 <a href="http://www.english.purdue.edu/>.">http://www.english.purdue.edu/>.</a>
  - Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006 <a href="http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/">http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/</a>.

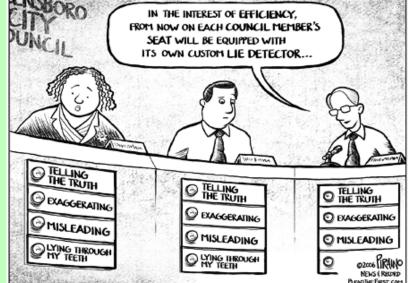


#### Look at the LINKS on the site

- What kinds of links are listed?
  - Are the links <u>relevant</u> and <u>appropriate</u> for the site?
  - Do the links go to internal pages on the same site or to other websites?



- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?
  - Can you **verify** any of the information in independent sources or from your own
     knowledge?



- Can you find any cases where the <u>author</u> <u>has plagiarized</u> other sources?
  - In other words, has the author used other authors' words or ideas without properly citing them, so as to pass them off as original ideas?



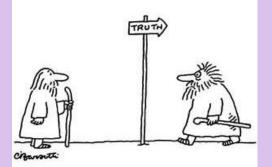
**The CRAAP Test** 

## P = <u>P</u>urpose



#### Purpose: <u>Why</u> the site was created:

- To inform?
- To promote an ideology?
- To enlighten?



- Informational websites present verifiable information without bias
  - The best informational websites have a neutral tone
  - Information can include:
    - facts
    - expert opinions
    - statistics
    - case studies
    - experiment results

#### Look for bias/opinion Bias" is not a negative term – it simply means that one has a certain perspective or point of view

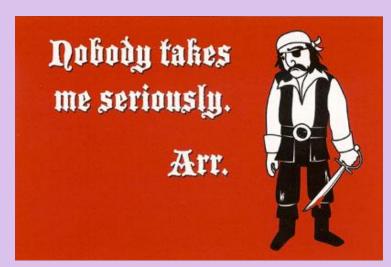
#### Look for bias/opinion

- Are possible biases clearly stated?
- Are editorials clearly labeled?
- Is the purpose of the page stated?
- Are strong words used, such as "murder" to describe eating meat?





Is the **tone** (whether serious, humorous, critical, etc.) and writing style of the source <u>appropriate</u> for the purpose and <u>audience?</u>



#### Tone is conveyed via word choice:

#### WE ARE

straight talking jargon free clear explanatory non-patronising authentic genuine

#### **IT IS**

direct accurate matter-of-fact friendly engaging polite natural

#### WE ARE NOT

arrogant aloof superfluous complicated impersonal cold about marketing speak

#### **IT IS NOT**

loud brash intimidating gushing predictable boring frilly

#### What's the point of the site?

- Is the site supposed to be educational?
- Is it entertaining?
- Does the site attempt to change the opinions of an audience with opposing viewpoints?







#### Is the site "for profit"?

- Is the site trying to sell something?
- Is <u>advertising content</u> vs. <u>informational</u> <u>content</u> easily distinguishable?
- Are donations being solicited?

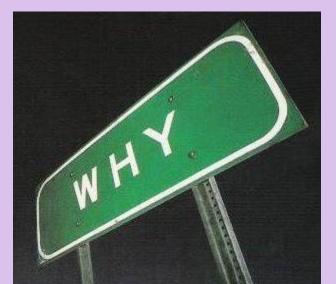








# When you think about Purpose, ask: WHY was this site created?



## **CRAAP** Test

# So, when you evaluate a website, put it through the CRAAP Test!

## **CRAAP** Test

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#### **The CRAAP Test End of Presentation!** You were expecting Wait...that something was it? else?