

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...



Evaluation Criteria



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

So easy a fly can do it!




Evaluation Criteria




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



Evaluation Criteria

- 
- Whether you find information in books and periodicals, on the Internet, or on television **you cannot assume it is reliable.**



But can I eat it?

Evaluation Criteria



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



Evaluation Criteria



- 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
- **P** = Purpose

The CRAAP Test

C = Currency

C = Currency

- **Currency: The timeliness of the web page.**
 - When was the information gathered?
 - When was it **posted**?
 - When was it **last revised**?



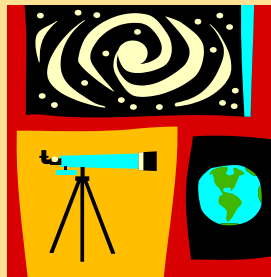
C = Currency

- **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 = Currency

- **How important is Currency?**
 - In fields such as **medicine, science, business, technology, and most social sciences**, currency of information **is important**. *(no older than 3 years!)*



C = Currency



- **Sometimes Currency is not all that important.**
 - In fields such as **history** and **literature**, older materials may be just as valuable as newer ones.



Washington

C = Currency

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



The CRAAP Test

R = Relevance

R = Relevance

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

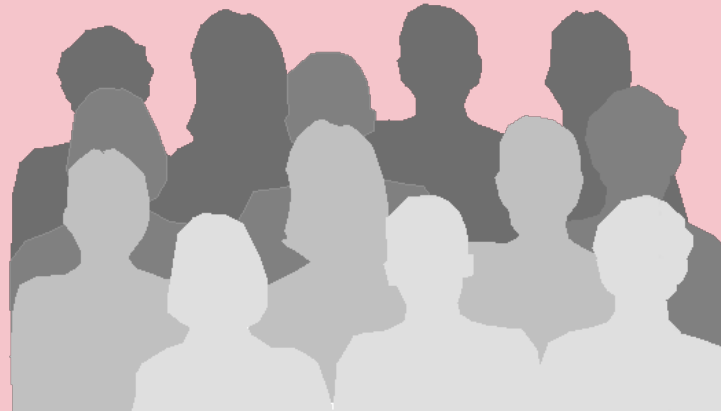


HALFWAY THROUGH PHILIPPIANS 2,
REVEREND PAUL MATTHEWS REALIZED
HE WAS PREACHING TO THE CHOIR.



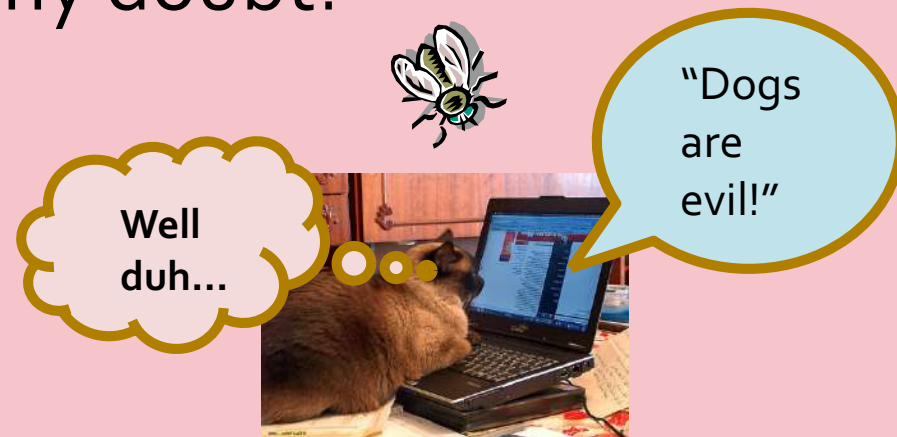
R = Relevance

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



R = Relevance

- 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?



R = Relevance

- Is **enough information** presented for the audience to understand the topic?
- Is the information **unique**?



R = Relevance

- 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 = Author

A = Author

- Websites are not always created by experts!



A = Author

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



www.urasucker4buying-this.com

www.hot-n-naked.com

www.rip-u-off.com

A = Author

The address holds information about the author!



- **.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

A = Author

- 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.

A = Author

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



A = Author

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



A = Author

- If you have a source with NO NAME or NO CORRESPONDING ORGANIZATION, **do not use** that source!



No way am I
putting my
name on
THAT!!



A = Author

■ Identify the author(s)



- A PERSON

- An ORGANIZATION



A = Author



● A PERSON



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

A = Author

- 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 endorsed by or **affiliated** with other organizations?
- Does it have a “**parent**” organization?

A = Author

- 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

A = Author

“.org” can be tricky...

- Most organizations have a **purpose or mission**, and this means they may present a **biased** view.



A = Author



“.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** (www.vegsoc.org) is an organization promoting vegetarianism.

- Both are legitimate “.org” sites, but they present very different views about meat.

A = Author

“.org” can be tricky...

Not all “.org” sites are reliable!

- Many helpful organizations and charities with good intentions have “.org” addresses, but some organizations promote prejudice, criminal activity, or harmful behavior.



A = Author

- **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 = Author

- **How to verify an author:**
 - Use a search engine (such as Google or Yahoo) to find information about the author(s)
 - Do a “Who is” search at www.whois.net to determine the website’s registered domain



The CRAAP Test

A = Accuracy

A = Accuracy

- **Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the informational content.**

Scary.



A = Accuracy

- **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 = Accuracy

- Does the author support his or her statements with data or works cited?
- 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
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006
<<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/>>.

A = Accuracy

Look at the LINKS on the site

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



A = Accuracy

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



A = Accuracy

- Can you find any cases where the author has plagiarized 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 = Purpose

P = Purpose

- **Purpose: Why the site was created:**
 - To inform?
 - To promote an ideology?
 - To enlighten?



P = Purpose

- **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

P = Purpose

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

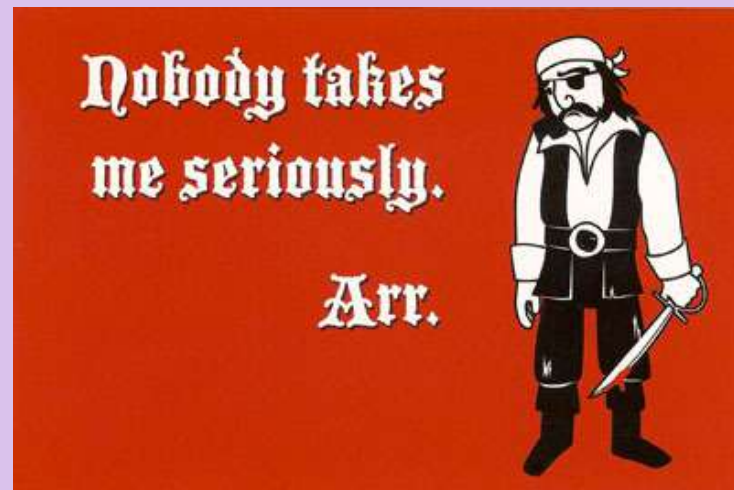
P = Purpose

- 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?



P = Purpose

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



P = Purpose

- Tone is conveyed via word choice:

WE ARE straight talking jargon free clear explanatory non-patronising authentic genuine	WE ARE NOT arrogant aloof superfluous complicated impersonal cold about marketing speak
IT IS direct accurate matter-of-fact friendly engaging polite natural	IT IS NOT loud brash intimidating gushing predictable boring frilly

P = Purpose

- 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?



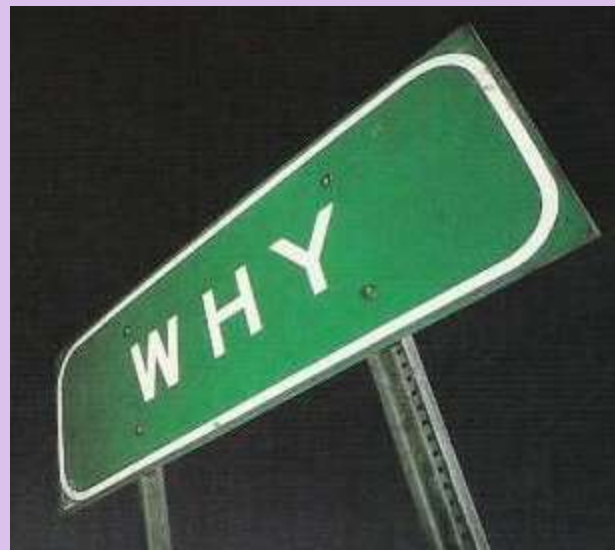
P = Purpose

- **Is the site “for profit”?**
 - Is the site trying to **sell something**?
 - Is advertising content vs. informational content easily distinguishable?
 - Are **donations** being solicited?





P = Purpose

- 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

- **C** = Currency
- **R** = Relevance
- **A** = Author
- **A** = Accuracy
- **P** = Purpose

The CRAAP Test

End of Presentation!

Wait...that
was it?



You were
expecting
something
else?

