



MODULE 1

INFORMATION & DATA LITERACY

Evaluating Digital Content

Explorer Level Activities



Evaluating digital content

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

When you search for information and data, you're going to find lots of it, but a very important question arises: *"Is this information good enough?"*

From your experience and intuition, you can answer roughly to the above question but if you want to be more certain, there is a tool that can help you.

The **CRAAP Test** is a list of questions to help you evaluate the information you find. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your situation or need.

Currency: the timeliness of the information

- **When** was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out of date for your topic?
- Are the links functional?

Relevance: the 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 using this source for your research topic?

Authority: the source of the information

- **Who** is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?
- What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? Examples:
 - .com (commercial),
 - .edu (educational),
 - .gov (U.S. government),
 - .org (nonprofit organization),
 - .net (network - although originally developed for companies involved in networking technology, nowadays .net is one of the most popular domain names used by companies all over the world).

Accuracy: the 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 biased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?



Purpose: the reason the information exists

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

Exercise: Assess Currency

Assessing currency means understanding the importance of timely information.

Imagine that you are planning a trip to a European country for the next few weeks but you want to know what coronavirus lockdown rules exist in that country at the moment and in the next few weeks.

- Make a query in a web search engine for the country's lockdown rules.
- Read some of the results and gather the information you want.
- Are you sure the information is current?
- Write a sentence explaining why you would or would not use each resource, paying special attention to the currency of each item.

Exercise: Find Relevant Sources

Relevance is the importance of the information for your specific needs.

You are doing research for a paper where you want to argue that vaccinations have no connection to autism. Which of these resources would you consider relevant? Why or why not?

- Hviid, Anders, Michael Stellfield, Jan Wohlfart, and Mads Melbye. "Association Between Thimerosal-Containing Vaccine and Autism." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 290, no. 13 (October 1, 2003): 1763–1766. <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=197365>
- Chepkemoi Maina, Lillian, Simon Karanja, and Janeth Kombich. "Immunization Coverage and Its Determinants among Children Aged 12–23 Months in a Peri-Urban Area of Kenya." *Pan-African Medical Journal* 14, no.3 (February 1, 2013). <http://www.panafrican-med-journal.com/content/article/14/3/full/>

Exercise: Identify Authoritative Sources

Authority is the source of the information—the author's purpose and what their credentials and/or affiliations are.

The following items are all related to a research paper on women in the workplace. Write two sentences for each resource explaining why the author or authors might or might not be considered authoritative in this field. Check their biography (if found) or headlines of other articles they have written:

- Carvajal, Doreen. "The Codes That Need to Be Broken." *New York Times*, January 26, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/27/world/27iht-rules27.html?_r=0
- Sheffield, Rachel. "Breadwinner Mothers: The Rest of the Story." The Foundry Conservative Policy News Blog, June 3, 2013. <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/06/03/breadwinner-mothers-the-rest-of-the-story>



- Baker, Katie J.M. “Your Guide to the Very Important Paycheck Fairness Act.” Jezebel (blog), January 31, 2013, <https://jezebel.com/your-guide-to-the-very-important-paycheck-fairness-act-30763797>

Exercise: Find Accurate Sources

Accuracy is the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content.

Which of the following articles are peer reviewed? How do you know? How did you find out? Were you able to access the articles to examine them?

- Coleman, Isobel. “The Global Glass Ceiling.” *Current* 524 (2010): 3–6.
- Lang, Ilene H. “Have Women Shattered the Glass Ceiling?” Editorial, *USA Today*, April 14, 2010, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2010-04-15-column15_ST1_N.htm?csp=34
- Townsend, Bickley. “Breaking Through: The Glass Ceiling Revisited.” *Equal Opportunities International* 16, no. 5 (1997): 4–13.

Exercise: Identify the Information Purpose

Purpose is the reason the information exists—determine if the information has clear intentions or purpose and if the information is fact, opinion, or propaganda.

Take a look at the following sources. Why do you think this information was created? Who is the creator? Most websites have “contact us” or “about us” or “about” pages that provide information about who owns the site.

- <https://www.chevron.com/sustainability/environment/climate-change>
- <https://beefnutritioneducation.org>
- Fahrenheit 911—Movie. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0361596>
- Lydall, Wendy. *Raising a Vaccine Free Child*. Inkwazi Press, 2009
- <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Threats-to-Wildlife>
- <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus>
- Owen, Mark and Kevin Maurer. *No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden*. New York: Penguin, 2012.
- Your Brain on Video Games
http://www.ted.com/talks/daphne_bavelier_your_brain_on_video_games.html

References

[The Information Literacy User’s Guide: An Open, Online Textbook](#) by Deborah Bernnard, Greg Bobish, Jenna Hecker, Irina Holden, Allison Hosier, Trudi Jacobson, Tor Loney, and Daryl Bullis is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.



Sources:

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<https://commons.emich.edu/loexquarterly/vol31/iss3/4>

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<https://en101test.pressbooks.com/chapter/15-4-craap-test-evaluating-sources>

Frederick Community College. (n.d.). English 101: Evaluating Resources. Retrieved from Frederick Community College - Library: <https://guides.frederick.edu/c.php?g=172447&p=1137361>

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https://guides.frederick.edu/ld.php?content_id=6444467

Frederick Community College. (n.d.). The Five Quality Measures of the CRAAP Test. Retrieved from
https://guides.frederick.edu/ld.php?content_id=6444429

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). Evaluate: Assessing Your Research Process and Findings. Retrieved from Information Literacy, Chapter 5:
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/informationliteracy/chapter/evaluate-assessing-your-research-process-and-findings>

The Australian National University. (n.d.). The TRAAP Test. Retrieved from The Australian National University: <https://libguides.anu.edu.au/c.php?g=906019&p=6594267>

TOOLS DATA & RESOURCES NEEDED

- Web Browser (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Opera, etc.)

TIME REQUIRED

- 10 minutes: Study and discuss material about CRAAP test
- 50 minutes for activities (10 minutes for each).