Evaluating Websites

Websites can be great sources of information. However, not all are safe to use for academic research. Since anyone can post anything onto the internet at any time, there is a lot of silly, incorrect, and biased information to wade through. The best way to make sure the information on a website is accurate is to evaluate it yourself.

A simple but powerful way to evaluate websites is to use the CRAAP technique. CRAAP stands for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. Some questions to keep in mind while using CRAAP to evaluate a website include:

Currency:
• Is the information up-to-date? When was it posted?
• Is the website updated regularly?

Relevance:
• Does the information relate to your research topic?
• Is the information in-depth enough for academic use?

Authority:
• Is the author qualified to write about this topic?
• Has the author posted any autobiographical information under a sub-page such as "About Me?"
• Can you find additional information about the author through Google?
• Has the author listed their contact information?

Accuracy:
• Is the information reliable, error-free, and supported by evidence?
• Has the author cited their work?

Purpose:
• Is the information presented objectively, or could the author be trying to sell, entertain, or persuade?
• Can you detect any potential biases?

You can also use CRAAP to analyze news reports, documentaries, books, and any other information you find online or offline.

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