Evaluating your search results

In this video, we'll talk about how to evaluate all the information you found. To choose which sources would be most useful for your research, you can use the CRAAP test. CRAAP stands for: Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. These are five criteria you can use to separate the good information from the bad. Let's take a closer look. Ready?

C stands for Currency. When was the article written? This is especially important in some disciplines, like the sciences, where you want as up-to-date information as possible. You can tell when an article was published by looking at the date on the citation.

R stands for Relevance. How is the article related to your topic? What aspect of your topic does the article cover? So if we were writing a paper on the effects of Hurricane Katrina on children, this article would not be appropriate because it covers a different aspect of the topic. [article shown has title: Effects of Hurricane Katrina on benthic macroinvertebrate communities along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast] Is the article too broad or too narrow? This one would be way too broad. [article shown has title: Climatology of tornadoes associated with Gulf Coast-landfalling hurricanes] Who is the intended audience? An article written for middle schoolers might have some great information but probably wouldn't be appropriate for a college-level paper. And finally ask yourself whether the article adds anything new to your research.

The first A in the CRAAP test stands for Authority. Where did the information come from? Who is the author? You can usually see the author's qualifications and affiliations by looking in the article below their name. Who published the article? Scholarly journals are published by universities or professional associations.

The second A stands for Accuracy. How reliable is the information? If you found your article in Galileo then you've already taken a step in the right direction. Is the article peer-reviewed? Are there references? References are at the end of an article, and they show where the author got their information.

P stands for Purpose. Why was the article written? Was it written to persuade, inform, or entertain? This article was obviously written to entertain. [article shown has title: Hurricane Katrina returns to New Orleans to apologize] Does the point of view appear objective? So an editorial might not be appropriate because an editorial by nature presents the opinion of the author.

Remember Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. If you have any questions, just ask us.