Website Evaluation with the CRAP Test

In the age of the internet, where anyone can write a blog or publish an article, it has become more difficult to determine if the information that you are using is credible or not. It is more important than ever to evaluate your resources and determine if you have crap or gold.

The CRAP Test is a series of questions to ask yourself when trying to decide if a website is a credible, valid source.

**Currency**

- How recent is the information?
- How recently has the website been updated?
- Is it current enough for your topic?

While different subject areas have varying standards for how old resources can be, good websites are kept up to date and clearly state when articles have been written.

Be sure to check the top and bottom of the article and webpage to see when it was written. If you cannot find the date, that is a red flag and you should be wary of using the website or article as a resource.

**Reliability**

- What kind of information is included in the resource?
- Is content of the resource primarily opinion? Is it balanced?
- Does the creator provide references or sources for data or quotations? Where did the author get their info?
- Is the information accurate and well-edited?

Look for in-text citations, references, or links to where the author sourced their information. Credible resources always cite their sources!

According to the F.B.I.’s most recent national crime report — the 2013 Crime in the United States Publication — there were 461 justifiable homicides by law enforcement officers in 2013. There were 426 in 2012, 404 in 2011, 397 in 2010 and 414 in 2009.

Adapted from Molly Beestrum’s original CRAP test.
**Authority**

- Who is the creator or author?
- What are their credentials?
- Who is the publisher or sponsor?
- Are they reputable?
- What is the publisher's interest (if any) in this information?

If no author is listed, imagine yourself writing the same article. The author could have no more knowledge of the topic than you do.

At the bottom of martinlutherking.org you will see that it is sponsored by Stormfront, a white supremacist group.

**Purpose**

- Is this fact or opinion?
- Is it biased?
- Is the creator/author trying to sell you something? Are there advertisements on the website?

Nearly everything has a bias, so the only bad bias is the hidden bias. If they go to great lengths to defend or obscure their bias, then be suspicious!

If you have any questions, contact the Library at the following:

**Library Hours:**
- Mon-Thur: 7:30am–8pm
- Fri: 7:30am–5pm
- Sat: 11am–3pm
- Sun: Closed

**Reference Desk**: 503-594-6042
**Circulation Desk**: 503-594-6323
**Email**: reference@clackamas.edu

Call library for summer and break hours

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