Evaluating Websites -
Are my sources CRAAP?
Why should I take the time to evaluate information I find on the Web?

Because you can’t be sure anyone else is doing it for you! The web is great because so many different people can contribute information. Some of the information that is found is very useful for your research papers because it is accurate, current, and objective.

Other information that can be found on the web is based on the person who is maintaining the webpage’s opinion. You must be able to recognize the difference and sift out the useful material in order to have a more accurate research paper.

*Caveat lector: Let the reader beware.*
Evaluate the quality and relevance of the information you are finding by seeing if it holds up to the CRAAP test.

"On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog."
CRAAP

Currency  
Relevance  
Authority  
Accuracy  
Purpose

The CRAAP Test is a list of questions to determine if the information you have is reliable.
Currency

- 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- Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?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

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level?
- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?
Authority

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- 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 an email address?
Accuracy

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source?
- Does the language or tone seem biased or free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or other typographical errors?
Purpose

- 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 bias?
Check the URL:

• .gov is for a government agency
• .edu is for an educational institution
• .org is for non-profit organizations
• .net is for networks
• .com means a commercial site
• ~ means a personal page
Still need help?
Stop by CSB/SJU Libraries
www.csbsju.edu/library

The CRAAP acronym and descriptions are from Meriam Library at California State University Chico. CRAAP Test from the Meriam Library website.