

## Evaluating Information Sources: The CAARP Test

When you search for information, you're going to find a wide variety of sources . . . but are they accurate and reliable? You will have to determine this for yourself, and the **CAARP Test** can help. The **CAARP Test** is a list of questions to ask yourself that will help in determining whether or not the information you find is reliable. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your situation or need. (\* *indicates question is for Internet sources only*)

### **C**urrency: *The timeliness of the information.*

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- Is the information current or out-of date for your topic?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

### **A**uthority: *The source of the information.*

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given? What are they?
- 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 .edu .gov .org .net** \*

### **A**ccuracy: *The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the informational content.*

- Where does the information come from? Is it 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 seem biased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

### **R**elevance: *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 a research paper?

### **P**urpose: *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?