Handout: Evaluating Sources

# Types of information sources

* Peer reviewed articles
* Scientific articles
* Books
* Magazine (online or print)
* Newspaper
* Blog
* Social Media: twitter, Facebook,
* Government information
* White papers
* So many more! What else?

# Where can you find information? Or where do you search?

* Library Databases/website
* Google Scholar – can connect to library resources
* Web search – Google, Bing, Duck Duck Go, etc.
* Social Media
* So many more! What else?

Can you **trust the information the same** coming from all these places? Why or why not?

When would you use each type of source?

# Peer Review

When something is peer-reviewed, it means that before it is published, it is reviewed by other experts in the field.

# Bias

Bias is when a statement/idea/believe reflects a partiality, preference, or prejudice for or against a person, object, or idea

# Astroturfing

“the bias is often intentionally hidden in a practice called astroturfing: masking the true intent (be it political, religious, commercial, or social) of the organization by making it appear more widespread and organic in origin." (The MLA Style Center; <https://style.mla.org/lateral-reading/>)

# Cross Referencing or Lateral Reading

Simply Google the website/source and see what you find about it!

* Steps for cross referencing:
	+ Research the **website’s author or organization**. Identify any possible bias or messaging associated with the organization.
	+ Identify **keywords** in your source and complete your own web search of that topic. Compare the results with your original source.
	+ Find a **quotation** attributed to specific people. Conduct your own research to verify the quotation and confirm it has not been taken out of context or misconstrued.
	+ Look for **hyperlinks** or **citations** to other organizations or sources. Conduct an online search of those organizations to determine any possible bias or messaging associated with the organization or sources.
	+ Look for any **advertisements** or sponsored content on the website. Conduct a web search to identify possible bias.

# CRAAP Test

Sources can be useful in different contexts (i.e. biased piece would not be appropriate for a factual overview, but would be appropriate for paper showing the range of human opinions on a topic)

* **Currency**: the timeliness of the information

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**: 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? Have you looked at a variety of sources?

* **Authority**: the source of the information

Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given, and what are they? What are the author's qualifications? Does the author offer a unique perspective or point-of-view outside of the mainstream opinion? Do they have lived experiences that can contribute to the conversation?

* **Accuracy**: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content, and

Where does the information come from? Is it supported by evidence? Has it been reviewed? Can you verify any of the information in another source? Does the language or tone seem biased?

* **Purpose**: the reason the information exists

What is the purpose of the information? Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions clear? Is the information fact / opinion / propaganda? Is it objective, impartial & unbiased?