

Effective Research

Documenting Your Search

Use the most recent version of APA.

Using the Internet

Use the following link titled *Google Search Basics: More Search Help* to learn more about effectively searching the Internet.

<http://www.google.com/support/websearch/bin/answer.py?answer=136861>

Places to Begin Your EDD Search

- Local, school, or post-secondary institution library
 - Access to professional journals through services like EbscoHost or ProQuest
- <http://www.google.com/patents>
- <http://scholar.google.com/>
- <http://books.google.com/books>
- <http://www.osun.org/>

Choosing Credible Sources

Print books and professional journals (especially peer-reviewed) are generally reliable and credible. Universities are generally the best source for these. Many professional journals are available online for free or through a university or library source. Some states also provide a service with access to professional journal articles.

Internet sources are the most readily available, but since anybody can put anything on the Internet, you must scrutinize materials before considering them for use.

A common test used to determine the validity of sources was developed by librarians at California State University, Chico. Their approach is detailed below.

Evaluating information: Applying the CRAAP test. (2009). Retrieved December 21, 2009, from http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf

The CRAAP Test provides a list of questions to determine whether the information that you have located is reliable. Please keep in mind that the following list is not static or complete. Different criteria will be more or less important depending on your situation or need.

Evaluation Criteria

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- Is the information current or out-of-date with regard to your topic?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 (i.e., not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you reviewed a variety of sources before determining this is one that you will use?
- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

Authority: The source of the information.

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations? Are they given?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source (e.g., .com, .edu, .gov, .org, .net) or lend credibility to the source?

Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the informational content.

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

Purpose: 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?