### Section Name
Evaluating Information

### Learning Objectives for Section
- Identify scholarly information using consciously selected criteria
- Determine whether information should be incorporated into an assignment and/or trusted
- Determine potential bias of information source
- Perform additional research to verify information

### Related ACRL Standards Addressed

**STANDARD THREE:** The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

**Performance Indicator 2** - The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.

**Performance Indicator 5** - The information literate student determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual's value system and takes steps to reconcile differences.

**STANDARD FOUR:** The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

**Performance Indicator 2** - The information literate student revises the development process for the product or performance.

### Multimedia
- **Video:** Citation Needed (2:00)
- **Tutorial:** Evaluating Resources
- **Quiz:** Evaluating Information (3 questions)
- **Video:** Research on the Open Web
- **Video:** Peer Review
- **Quiz:** Peer Review (5 questions)

### Introduction (real world relevance)
In making arguments and decisions based on information, always evaluate sources to determine their purpose, validity, and accuracy.

### Topics for Discussion
- Importance of using scholarly sources
- Peer-review process

### Evaluation Criteria:
- **Authority**
  - Who is the author?
  - What other work has been produced by the author(s)? What are their credentials?
  - Who is the publisher?
  - What is the reputation of the publisher?
  - If the information is available on a website, what kind of site is it? Educational institution? Government? Nonprofit organization? Commercial?
• **Accuracy**
  o Can the information be verified via cited sources?
  o Does it agree with other sources? If not, do more research.
  o Has information about methodology been included?

• **Currency**
  o Is currency important for your subject/topic?
  o Can you determine when the information was produced/published?
  o If the information is dated, but otherwise good for your project, look for more recent work from the same author
  o Does the information need to be examined from a historical or cultural perspective?

• **Coverage**
  o Is the scope appropriate for your topic?
  o What is the focus?
  o What information is included/excluded?
  o If it describes research, is there information about the sample used in the research? Is the sample representative of the population?

• **Objectivity**
  o What is the purpose of the work?
  o Does the work offer facts, opinions, or a combination?
  o What is the tone of the work?
  o What assumptions does it make?

• **Audience**
  o Is this a scholarly publication? Trade information? General?
  o If it is a webpage, is it part of a larger site?

• **Evaluating non-scholarly sources**
  o Same principles: Depending on information need, less emphasis on scholarly information requirement.
  o For non-scholarly resources, make sure to understand the motivation of the information provider.
  o Ask questions and verify information across multiple resources.
  o Don’t just rely on the Web.

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**Activities**

Ask students to find two unacceptable sources on a topic relevant to an academic assignment, and one acceptable source. Ask the students to write a paragraph or essay describing the evaluation process, their observations, and decision for each of the three sources. If time permits, have students share reasons for finding a site unacceptable for an academic assignment.
Websites

“Crap Detection, A 21st Century Literacy” -
http://librariesandtransliteracy.wordpress.com/2010/09/16/crap-detection-a-21st-century-literacy/ - in the Libraries and Transliteracy blog. An alternative to the evaluation categories listed above, with category names forming the acronym CRAP.

Evaluating Health Information -