

# The Traap Test: Evaluating Information

Don't be trapped by sources--learn how to evaluate them!

(adapted from the Meriam Library, California State University, Chico)

## Timeliness: The "newness" of the information

- When was the information published or posted?
- Have there been new versions or editions since this was published?
- How quickly does new research for this topic come out?
- Does new research expand upon or replace old information for this topic?

## Timeliness

## Relevance: The depth and importance of the information for you

- Does this source help answer your question? Does only part of it help?
- Is it covering all aspects of your topic or only parts?
- How detailed is the information? Is it too basic for your needs? Too advanced?

## Relevance

## **Authority: The source of the information**

- Who is the author? What can you find about her in the source itself or through a web search?
- Is the author a professor or other expert? Does she have a degree related to the topic? Has she written on the topic previously?
- Is the author drawing from her own personal experience?
- Has the information been reviewed in some way, such as by an editor, fact checker, or through peer review? Was it self-published or posted on a personal site?

# Authority

## **Accuracy: The reliability and correctness of the information**

- Where does the information come from?
- Does the author cite other sources? What does she cite?
- For websites, did the author provide links to other sources? Do the links still work?
- For studies, experiments, and other original research, does the author explain the methods she used to find her results?

# Accuracy

- Does the information in this resource agree with other resources you have found and your own personal knowledge?

### **Purpose: The reason the information was created**

- Why did the author publish this source? Is she looking to inform, teach, advocate, sell, or entertain?
- Who is the intended audience? Is this designed for general readers or academic readers?
- What political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, personal or other perspectives does the author have?
- What perspectives are not included within this resource, especially less privileged perspectives?

# Purpose