



## C.A.R.S Checklist for Evaluating Sources

### **CREDIBILITY— Is the information and author authentic and reliable?**

- Is the author a credible source? Does the author include their credentials and contact information in their work? How do you know the author is credible?
- Is the piece sponsored or published by a credible organization?
- Is the piece free from grammatical errors, dead links, and other problems indicating a lack of quality control?

### **ACCURACY — Is the information current, comprehensive, detailed, and factual?**

- When was the work published? Does it have a copyright date? If the work was published more than 10 years ago, is the information still reliable and applicable today?
- Does the information in the work agree with other sources?
- Does the work contradict itself?
- How is the information relevant to your research needs?
- If online, how recently has the site been updated?

### **REASONABLENESS — Is the information objective, unbiased, and consistent?**

- Does the author or sponsor appear to have any biases? If so, what are the biases?
- What is the motivation or purpose for creating the work or site?
- Is the information balanced?

### **SUPPORT — Is the information verifiable?**

- How reliable, well-supported, and reasonable is the work?
- How many sources does the author use to support their claims? Can they be checked?
- Is there a way to contact the author or organization to verify the information?

### **Where can this information be found?**

Information about the author, organization, and publication date is usually located at the top or bottom of the page, and will be either at the beginning or end of the piece. However, in some instance, you might have to dig a deeper:

- ⇒ **You can find out about the organization or a website by looking at the URL.** There are no universal rules to determine which domains are good or bad, but the domain name can help you identify the organization. For example, .edu and .gov are usually more reliable than other domains.
- ⇒ **Try to avoid websites where the author can't be determined,** unless the website is reputable, such as a university, credible media outlet, government program/department, or well-known association.
- ⇒ **If your source is on the internet, the information might be found in a page of its own,** such as an “About” or “Contact Us” page.
- ⇒ **Beware of personal or homemade blogs and Wikipedia** because anyone can be considered an “expert” on a topic.

**Further Assistance:** For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427.