

Become Information Savvy: Use the CARB Formula to Carefully Evaluate Your Print & Web Sources

C = **Currency.**
When was the source published or updated?
Is timeliness important for your topic?

A = **Authority.**
Who wrote this source?
Are the credentials of the author stated? Is the author well known?
What institution, company, university, government agency, or association supports this information? Does the group sponsoring the information have a particular agenda, bias, or purpose?
✓ Remember *anyone* can post *anything* to the Web.
✓ Print sources, especially journal articles, have usually gone through several review processes before publication.

R = **Relevancy.**
Is this source really *relevant* to your topic?
Is the information a news item or a substantial commentary or study?
Are there **better** sources available? Examine your search results carefully and select the information that is *most* relevant to your topic.
Some databases have a special feature that will allow you to retrieve or sort your search results by “relevancy.”
✓ Remember: If you did not get good results with your first search, refine your search statement and search again. It’s quick and easy to redo your searches to get more relevant results.

B = **Bias.**
What is the purpose of this information?
Does the source inform, persuade, advertise, mislead?

✓ Remember: Library sources, both print and online, are more likely to be authoritative and substantive than those sources you just find on the Web.

For additional tips on evaluating sources:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_evalsource.html
<http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/general/webeval.htm>