

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