

EVALUATION OF INFORMATION SOURCES AT USF LIBRARY

C.R.E.D.I.T. TEST CHECKLIST

Mark the appropriate points to determine whether your source fulfills the requirements of that criterion. A criterion is fulfilled when there are a greater number of points marked on the reliable source side than the questionable source side.

CREDIBILITY

A RELIABLE SOURCE:

- Includes information on the author.
- Includes citations.
- Edited professionally.
- Has been peer reviewed.
- Publishing body has a positive reputation in the subject.
- Addresses both sides of an issue in their argument.

A QUESTIONABLE SOURCE:

- Written anonymously or without author information.
- Does not include references to support statements.
- Has formatting or typographical errors.
- Has not been through any editing processes.
- Publishing body has a negative or no reputation.
- Does not include contact information for the publisher or the author.

RELEVANCE

A RELIABLE SOURCE:

- Content is related to your topic.
- Is to the required level of study.
- Inclusion of sources adds value to your topic.

A QUESTIONABLE SOURCE:

- Is overly specialized for your purposes.
- Is written at for a lower level of study.
- Is exceedingly vague or does not offer details regarding topic.

DEPENDABILITY

A RELIABLE SOURCE:

- Is print or online source published by a publishing company.
- Is a website run by a professional organization or academic group.
- Is indexed in a database or institutional repository.

A QUESTIONABLE SOURCE:

- Is a website without the approval of a governing body or a set of standards.
- Was stumbled upon and otherwise buried in the internet.
- Contains a significant number of bad links.
- Available through Google but nowhere else.

INTENT

A RELIABLE SOURCE:

- Presents information objectively.
- Provides information on both sides of the argument.
- Funded by non-profit firms.
- Authored by faculty at a university or non-profit research facility.

A QUESTIONABLE SOURCE:

- Written with an obvious bias.
- Author has a conflict of interest.
- Research funded by a for profit firm in the same industry.
- Created as advertising for a product.

TIMELINESS

A RELIABLE SOURCE:

- Is within the lifespan for information in that subject.
- Can be supported with current published information.
- Cites sources with historical and current relevance.

A QUESTIONABLE SOURCE:

- Contains information that is outdated.
- Does not include a publishing or creation date.
- Was published recently and does not include any recent sources as references.

HOW DO YOUR SOURCES STACK UP?

EACH SOURCE EVALUATION CRITERION ANSWERS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

CREDIBILITY:

How trustworthy is the information, the author or the publisher of this source?

RELEVANCE:

How does this source match my information needs?

DEPENDABILITY:

Will this source still be reliable and available when others look for it?

INTENT:

Is this source simply a means to disseminate information or is there an alternative agenda?

TIMELINESS:

Is this source current enough to include all the known information on the topic?

SOURCE EVALUATION EQUATIONS:

After going through the checklist to determine which of the criteria your source fulfills, use the following equations to determine whether the source should be used in your research and any special considerations which should be taken when using it. In general, if a source is missing more than one aspect of the checklist, it is questionable source and should not be used or used with considerable in text justification.

CREDIBILITY + RELEVANCE + DEPENDABILITY + INTENT + TIMELINESS =
USE SOURCE WITH CONFIDENCE.

CREDIBILITY + RELEVANCE + DEPENDABILITY +TIMELINESS – INTENT =
USE SOURCE, SUPPLEMENT WITH OTHER SIDE OF SUBJECT.

CREDIBILITY + RELEVANCE + DEPENDABILITY + INTENT – TIMELINESS =
USE, SUPPLEMENT WITH CURRENT INFORMATION.

CREDIBILITY + DEPENDABILITY +INTENT +TIMELINESS - RELEVANCE =
USE SOURCE, JUSTIFY INCLUSION IN TEXT.

RELEVANCE + DEPENDABILITY +INTENT +TIMELINESS – CREDIBILITY =
USE SOURCE, JUSTIFY INCLUSION IN TEXT.

CREDIBILITY + RELEVANCE + INTENT + TIMELINESS - DEPENDABILITY =
USE SOURCE, JUSTIFY INCLUSION IN TEXT.