RADAR

Evaluating Information Sources: RADAR is a framework that can help you remember what kinds of questions you should be asking about an information source as you evaluate it for quality and usefulness in your research.

RATIONALE	Rationale is important because books, articles, and web pages are made to serve a purpose. They can educate, entertain, or sell a product or point of view. Some sources may be frivolous or commercial in nature, providing inaccurate, false, or biased information. Other sources are more ambiguous about any potential partiality. Varied points of view can be valid if they are based on good reasoning and careful use of evidence.	1. Why did the author or publisher make this information available? Is there a sponsor or advertising? Who pays to help make this information available? 2. Are alternative points of view presented? 3. Does the author omit any important facts or data that might disprove their claim? 4. Does the author use strong emotional language? Are there other emotional clues such as all caps?
AUTHORITY	Authority is important in judging the credibility of the author's assertions. In a trial regarding DNA evidence, a jury would find a genetics specialist's testimony far more authoritative compared to a testimony from a random person off the street.	1. What are the author's credentials? 2. Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or a prominent organization? 3. Can you find information about the author in reference books or on the Internet? 4. Do other books or articles on the same research topic cite the author? 5. Is the publisher of the information source reputable? 6. If it's on the Internet, is it fabricated or intended as satire? Check the "About" page and google it with the word "fake" to make sure it's legit.
DATE	Date, or currency, is important to note because information can quickly become obsolete. Supporting your research with facts that have been superseded by new research or recent events weakens your argument. Not all assignments require the most current information; older materials can provide valuable information such as a historical overview of your topic. In some disciplines, the date of the source is less important.	1. When was the information published or last updated? 2. Have newer articles been published on your topic? 3. Are links or references to other sources up-to-date? 4. Is your topic in an area that changes rapidly, like technology or science? 5. Is the information obsolete?
ACCURACY	Accuracy is important because errors and untruths distort a line of reasoning. When you present inaccurate information, you undermine your own credibility.	1. Are there statements you know to be false? Verify an unlikely story by finding a reputable outlet reporting the same thing. 2. Was the information reviewed by editors or subject experts before it was published? Was it fact-checked? How do you know? 3. Do the citations and references support the author's claim? Are the references correctly cited? Follow the links. If there are no references or bad references, this could be a red flag. 4. What do other people have to say on the topic? Is there general agreement among subject experts? 5. If applicable, is there a description of the research method used? Does the method seem appropriate and well-executed? 6. Was item published by a peer-reviewed journal, academic press, or other reliable publisher? 7. If there are pictures, were they photo-shopped in? Use a reverse image search engine like TinEye to see where an image really comes from. 8. For websites, what is the domain? Fake sites often add ".co" to trusted brands (e.g. abcnews.com.co)
RELEVANCE	Relevance is important because you are expected to support your ideas with pertinent information. A source detailing Einstein's marriage would not be very relevant to a paper about his scientific theories.	1. Does the information answer your research question? 2. Does the information meet the stated requirements for the assignment? 3. Is the information too technical or too simplified for you to use? 4. Who is the intended audience? 5. Does the source add something new to your knowledge of the topic? 6. Is the information focused on the geographical location you are interested in?

Adapted from:

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Meriam Library at California State University, Chico. (2010, September 17). *Evaluating information-Applying the CRAAP test.* Retrieved from http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf