



# Randall Library Instructional Services

## Using the CRITIC Acronym to Evaluate Information Sources

CRITIC is a tool that will help you evaluate and select credible sources of information. What follows are six important factors that should be considered when evaluating all information sources:

### 1. **Claim**

What is the main point or claim of the source? Is the source's claim both timely and relevant to your particular question or research topic?

### 2. **Reliability of Author**

Is the author of the source clearly identifiable? If so, can the author's credibility be established?

Note: if you suspect that the author lacks credibility this does not automatically invalidate the information. Rather, it means that you will have to place more emphasis on the other steps of CRITIC before you can make a decision on this source.

### 3. **Information Backing the Claim**

What information does the source present to support its claim? Is it information that can be verified or does this source rely on testimony or anecdotal evidence? If this source presents original research, does the source explain how the author gathered his/her data? Does the source have a reference list?

### 4. **Testing**

Can you devise a possible way to test the claim? Can you verify the information or research? Would you be able to find more information on this claim in other sources? Remember to consult more than one source to determine if information is consistent and reliable. If a claim cannot be tested or verified then the claim should not be treated seriously.

### 5. **Intent**

Is the intended audience easily identifiable (e.g., mass audience, professionals or practitioners of the field, specialized, technical audience)? Has the author presented the claim in a clear and reasonable manner or is there evidence of motivationally biased language (are they trying to persuade you)? If the source is overtly biased or totally unintelligible, you may have to reconsider using it as a resource for your paper.

### 6. **Conclusion**

What is your conclusion about the source? It is important to remember that the first five steps of CRITIC should be considered as a whole before you can make a final decision about your source.

Remember! Anyone can create a web page. Even published sources that have had editorial reviews can be biased or erroneous. By using the CRITIC Acronym to evaluate all sources of information you stand a much better chance of selecting credible and worthy information for your papers or reports.

The CRITIC Assignment was adapted from:  
Helmke, J. & Matthies B. (2004). Using the CRITIC Acronym to Teach Information Evaluation.  
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