

How to Find Reliable Sources

When conducting research for an assignment (i.e. a major term paper), you may find yourself consulting web resources. However, navigating the vast selection of websites to find the correct information can be tricky if you don't have a technique for sorting reliable resources from unreliable ones. The acronym "CAARP" (like the fish) can be used to evaluate any web resource to ensure its currency, accuracy, authority, relevancy, and purpose. These five criteria must be met in order for a website to be considered a "good" resource.

1. **Currency:** A solid web resource must contain current information. Outdated information is generally unacceptable for research projects, especially projects involving science and technology since they are constantly evolving.
2. **Accuracy:** Reliable web sources contain information that is completely correct. You wouldn't want to include incorrect facts in a scholarly research paper. Make sure to double check any information that you find on the web with a known source.
3. **Authority:** A website is authoritative if it is composed by renowned people related to the topic of study. For instance, if you are completing research on Parkinson's disease, an authoritative website would be one that is written by a team of professionally recognized physicians who are experts on the illness.
4. **Relevancy:** A reliable web source is one that is relevant to the topic you are researching. A relevant website does not stray off-topic and presents its information in a clear, concise manner.
5. **Purpose:** When searching for quality web resources, it is helpful to check the purpose of the website in question. Websites can have many different purposes, ranging from entertaining to informing to persuading viewers. A website which mainly entertains its visitors may not be suitable for a research paper. You should instead search for a website that is intended to inform.

