Website Evaluation - Just C.A.R.T. it!

The Internet gives us access to A LOT of information but not all of it is reliable. When we use it to do research we must do our best to find accurate and reliable information. So, how can you tell if information from a website is accurate and reliable? Just C.A.R.T. it before you use it!

Let’s look closely at the following criteria that we will use to evaluate a website:

- **CURRENT**
- **ACCESSIBLE**
- **RELEVANT**
- **TRUSTWORTHY**

**CURRENT** - if your topic is time-sensitive, (for example: you need to find the most recent population of the U.S.) then you need to make sure information you use is up to date. Look for a copyright date or “modified” date, usually on the bottom of the web page. Be cautious of web pages with broken links (links that go nowhere) - this is a good sign that the web page hasn’t been updated recently so you should consider using another source.

If your topic is not time-sensitive (for example: researching the life of the Ancient Egyptian Pharoah Hatshepsut), then up-to-date information isn’t as important. In that case, continue to evaluate the web page based on the following criteria:

**ACCESSIBLE** - can you read and understand the information on the page? Are the graphics well organized and appropriate? If not, look for another source that is written at a level that you can easily read and understand.

**RELEVANT** - Does the page have enough information about your topic? Is it specific enough? If not, look for another source.

**TRUSTWORTHY** - has it been fact-checked? Can you find the author or editor’s name? If not, look for an “About Us” or “FAQs” link or check the Home Page for information about the author, editor, or organization responsible for the website. If that information is missing you should consider using another source. Trustworthy websites make it a point to tell us where the information comes from so we can get a better understanding of who is responsible for it.

Remember: before you use information from a website, C.A.R.T. it before you use it!