**Get the Most out of Internet Searching**

Handout

# SEARCHING

## Define your question

## Set your expectations

* When I find the answer, what do I think it will look like?

## Identify search terms + synonyms

* Use keywords, not sentences
  + *“weather Vancouver tomorrow”* vs. *“what will the weather be like in Vancouver tomorrow?”*
* Use nouns and verbs
* Use at least 3 words if possible
* Spell out abbreviations

## Narrowing your search using words and symbols:

* Search for an exact match: put a word or phrase inside quotes.
  + Ex: “coble boat”
* Search for wildcards or unknown words: put a \* in your phrase where you want to leave a placeholder.
  + Ex: “diabetic \* diets”
* Exclude words from your search: put - in front of a word you want to leave out.
  + Ex: cookie recipe -chocolate (to look for a cookie recipe that doesn’t have chocolate in it)

## Evaluate Results

* Use the CRAAP test, and check for Fake News

## Adapt your search

* Would this search benefit from additional keywords? Using a synonym instead?
* Most search engines will offer a list of search suggestions while typing in the search box– this can give you ideas for search terms that you may not have thought of

## Keep searching!

* Find more sources, cross-reference, refine your skills and get the best answer possible

# READING A WEBSITE

**Locate the main content.** This is usually the most relevant part of the page. On most pages it's easy to find, although you may sometimes have to scroll down.

**Make sure you're on the right webpage.** If you don't see any relevant information, use the navigation bar or search box to find a different page.

**Use headings to help skim the page.** Many online articles have a heading at the beginning of each section. If the heading doesn't seem relevant, skip that section.

**Don't read every word.** With most websites, you can skim the page to find what you're looking for. Read the first sentence of each paragraph.

**Ignore ads.** Ads are often embedded in an article or disguised as links. They may look like they're relevant, but they usually won't help you find what you're looking for.

**Use the back button.** If you've clicked on a link that isn't helpful, you can go back to the previous page by clicking your browser's **back button**. If the link was opened in a new window or tab, you may need to close it instead.

**CTRL+F.** Use CTRL + F to find a particular word on a webpage.

# EVALUATING A WEBSITE – CRAAP GUIDELINES

**Currency**: The timeliness of the information

* When was the information published or posted?
* Has the information been revised or updated?
* Is the information current or out-of date for your topic?
* Are the links functional?

**Relevance**: The importance of the information for your needs

* Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
* Who is the intended audience?
* Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too basic or advanced)?
* Have you looked at a variety of sources before deciding this is one?

**Authority**: The source of the information

* Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
* Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?
* What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
* Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
* Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

**Accuracy**: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content

* Where does the information come from?
* Is the information supported by evidence?
* Has the information been reviewed or referred?
* Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
* Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?
* Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

**Purpose**: The reason the information exists

* What is the purpose of the information? To inform? Teach? Sell? Entertain?
* Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
* Is the information fact? Opinion? Propaganda?
* Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
* Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

# how-to-spot-fake-news.jpg

# FACT CHECKING WEBSITES

* Assess the truthfulness or facts behind a claim
* Often focused on politicians
* May also address online hoaxes and myths

**Examples**

* **Factscan.ca**: nonpartisan fact-checker on Canadian federal politics
* **Factcheck.org**: monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players
* **Snopes.com:** U.S.-based; broader focus than just assessing politicians’ claims
* **Fullfact.org:** U.K.’s independent fact-checking charity

# LEARN MORE

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VPL Events Guide** | For days, times and locations, check out the “Computer & Technology” category in our Events Calendar. You can also look in the paper brochure “VPL Classes & Workshops”. | **www.vpl.ca/events** |
| **VPL Computer Practice Drop-In** | A drop-in to practice new skills with information staff assistance. | **Central Library**  **Tuesdays & Thursdays**  **2:00 - 3:00 pm** |
| **GCFLearnFree.org tutorials** | Free online tutorials for learning a range of essential skills including computer, technology and internet skills. | **www.gcflearnfree.org** |
| **DigitalLearn** | Online hub for digital literacy support and training. Great video-based modules with narration for basic digital skills learning! | **www.digitallearn.org** |
| **VPL Information Services** | We are here to help!  If you have any further questions, please ask us! | **Phone: 604-331-3603 Email: info@vpl.ca** |
| **VPL Research Guides** | **Computer Survival Guide**  Information and self-directed practice activities on introductory computer and Internet topics**.** | **guides.vpl.ca/computers** |