

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

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Presented by
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Tennessee General Assembly

OUTLINE

⦿ Research Techniques:

- For when you know where to go; and
- For when you don't know where to go.

⦿ Evaluating Information:

- How to determine if it is what you need; and
- How to determine if it is credible.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- What information do you need?
 - Read the current law.
 - Look at changes that previously occurred and decide if the departments/agencies/programs impacted at that time will be impacted again.
 - Compare budgets or allocations from previous changes to the proposed changes.
 - Did a specific department/agency/program have a fluctuation in its budget or funding specifically related to the previous changes?
 - Listen to past committee hearings.
 - Who testified?
 - Who was a proponent?
 - Who was adversarial?

HOW TO FIND INFORMATION

⊙ Government Websites:

- Federal departments
 - Typically includes reports or historical data
- State departments
 - Typically includes data sets, reports, surveys, salary data
- Local government websites
 - Reports, salary data, information

⊙ University Websites:

- Public and private universities
 - Research universities
 - Specialized schools
 - Schools known for a specialty

HOW TO FIND INFORMATION

- Think Tanks and Non-profits:
 - Non-partisan and partisan
 - Typically includes reports, surveys and/or historical data
 - Biased and unbiased
 - Typically includes reports, surveys and/or historical data
- NCSL and similar organizations:
 - Websites will include reports, surveys, data
 - Sign-up for list serves
 - State liaisons
 - Network connections with other states
- Google

CRAAP METHOD

- Created by Sarah Blakeslee
 - Librarian at California State University, Chico
- Currency
- Relevance
- Authority
- Accuracy
- Purpose

CURRENCY

- *The timeliness of the information*
 - *When was the information published or posted?*
 - *Has the information been revised or updated?*
 - *Do you need current information or will older information work better?*
 - *Is the information reasonably accessible?*

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?
 - Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is the source to use?
 - Are you comfortable citing this source?

AUTHORITY

- The source of the information
 - Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
 - What are the author's credentials and/or organizational affiliations?
 - Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
 - Is there contact information?

ACCURACY

- The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information
 - Where does the information come from?
 - Is the information supported by evidence?
 - Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
 - Can you verify any of the information?
 - Is the language/tone void of bias or emotion?
 - Are there spelling, typographical or grammatical errors?

PURPOSE

- The reason the information exists
 - Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
 - Does the author make her/his intentions known and clear?
 - Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
 - Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
 - Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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