EVALUATING SOURCES

Use this tip sheet to determine the reliability and usefulness of an information source

RELEVANCE What is it about?
- Examine title, abstract, and subject headings for connections to your research.

AUTHORITY Who created it?
- Research the reputation of the magazine, journal, or publisher.
- Locate and verify author credentials and affiliation(s).
- Identify parent organizations and funding sources.

ACCURACY Is it reliable?
- Investigate whether conclusions are well-reasoned and supported with evidence.
- Verify information with another reputable source.

PURPOSE Why was it written?
- Identify the intention of the source (to inform, persuade, etc.) to help detect potential bias.
- Identify intended audience (scholars, public, professionals).
- Inspect for author bias (e.g., omitting important information).

TIMELINESS When was it created?
- Identify both when the research was conducted and the date of publication.
- Decide whether dates affect usefulness for your research.