

## What the C.R.A.P.?

You will need at least one computer with projection screen and Internet connection for this activity. For a more dynamic session, ask five students to bring their laptops so that smaller groups of students can work on different aspects of the topic simultaneously.

Alternatively, for this session you can schedule the Electronic Classroom in the main library building by contacting Sue Erickson (2-0155) at least two days before the session, or reserve the Peabody Library Learning Commons by emailing [peabodyref@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:peabodyref@vanderbilt.edu).

After introducing the session and showing the PowerPoint slides, instructors may choose from any of the module components to create a session based on the group's interests.

### Introduction

Begin with brief discussion on selecting and evaluating sources used for assignments and research papers. **Don't explain the C.R.A. P. test at this time.** Let students talk about how they find sources to use in papers or other research assignments. You're listening to see if they go the easy route (only Google or Wikipedia) and if they stop to think about/evaluate their sources. Some questions you might ask to start the discussion:

- ✓ When you had to write a paper that required some research, where did you find the information? (Try to elicit examples like: Google, Wikipedia, journal articles, encyclopedias)
- ✓ In your research process, did you stop looking for information when you felt you had enough (i.e.: the right number of articles)?
- ✓ As you read through the information you find for your research, do you ever think "This information is too old to use?" or "This author's viewpoint is different from my other articles, I wonder why?"

### *C.R.A.P. Test* PowerPoint Slides

Go through the slides covering aspects of evaluation using the C.R.A.P. Test [http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/central/crap\\_files/frame.htm](http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/central/crap_files/frame.htm)

#### **Module Components:**

You may wish to select only one component for the group discussion or mix and match several.

## Module Component 1

### Applying the *C.R.A.P.* Test to Wikipedia

As a way to gauge the students' perceptions of Wikipedia before reviewing it in depth, spend a few minutes talking with the group about their thoughts on its accuracy and reliability. This exercise may work well as a precursor to the *Heavy Metal Umlaut* video.

As a group, apply the C.R.A.P. test to Wikipedia. Consider Wikipedia as a general source and do not focus on any specific article at this time. Have students respond to C.R.A.P. Test questions based on their own knowledge and use of Wikipedia.

- ✓ C (Currency)
  - How recent is the information in Wikipedia?
- ✓ R (Reliability)
  - Is the information balanced or biased? Are there citations or references to support the information?
- ✓ A (Authority)
  - Can you determine who the author/creator is?
- ✓ P (Purpose/Point of View)
  - What's the intent of the article? Are there ads trying to persuade you or sell something?

## Module Component 2

### The Evolution of Wikipedia Articles

[Length of clip: 8.5 minutes]

View the following video clip as a group:

Heavy metal umlaut: the movie

<http://weblog.infoworld.com/udell/2005/01/22.html>

[Click on the word screencast in the first sentence]

Using an obscure topic, this film highlights the dynamic environment of Wikipedia. Created by author and information architect, Jon Udell, this short video documents the evolution of the Heavy metal umlaut page.

You may choose to use statements from the **Wikipedia About Itself** component at this time, as students reflect on the video. You may want to ask students:

How has Wikipedia changed or influenced the evolution of information creation and sharing? Can you think of an example of how this might impact your daily experience?

## Module Component 3

### Applying The *C.R.A.P.* Test to Specific Wikipedia Articles and Comparative Scholarly Sources

Have students apply the C.R.A.P. Test to their Wikipedia article and the comparative scholarly article. There are 5 topics to select from. Each topic has a Wikipedia article and an article from a scholarly source for comparison purposes. (The topics are listed at the end of this module guide.)

This component can be structured in several ways. You may want the whole group to work on one topic together; divide the group into several smaller groups each selecting a different topic or perhaps select one topic, have half the group review Wikipedia and the other half review the scholarly sources and then compare findings.

Share and compare findings about the C.R.A.P. Test and how the specific sources fared. Have the students talk about their discoveries. You may want to begin with some of the following questions and then lead into the Wikipedia Discussion points in the next section.

- ✓ What did you discover about the currency of the two articles?
- ✓ What are your reasons for believing the information was or was not accurate or truthful?
- ✓ Did you notice who wrote the Wikipedia and scholarly articles? What were you able to find out about the authors?
- ✓ What do you think was the author's purpose in writing the article? After reading, were you swayed to one opinion over another?

## Module Component 4

### Wikipedia about itself:

Chose one or more of the following discussion points to facilitate further conversation about the use of Wikipedia and it's comparison to traditional scholarly sources: [These discussion points were taken from the [Wikipedia: About](#) page.]

1. "Wikipedia's greatest strengths, weaknesses, and differences all arise because it is open to anyone, has a large contributor base, and articles are written by consensus according to editorial guidelines and policies."
2. "As a [wiki](#), articles are never complete. They are continually edited and improved over time, and in general this results in an upward trend of quality, and a growing consensus over a fair and balanced representation of information...The *ideal* Wikipedia article is balanced, [neutral](#) and encyclopedic, containing comprehensive notable, [verifiable](#) knowledge."
3. "While *most* articles may be altered by anyone, in practice editing will be performed by a certain demographic (younger rather than older, male rather than female, rich enough to afford a computer rather than poor, etc) and may, therefore, show some bias. Some topics may not be covered well, whilst others may be covered in great depth."

## What the C.R.A.P.? Topics

### Coffee and Health

Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee\\_and\\_health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee_and_health)

Coffee Science Source - <http://www.coffeescience.org/>

### Hip Hop Music

Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip\\_hop\\_music](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop_music)

Grove Music Online -

<http://proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/login?url=http://tinyurl.com/visions-hip-hop>

### LA/Rodney King Riots

Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La\\_riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_riots)

Encyclopedia of American Race Riots -

<http://proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/login?url=http://tinyurl.com/visions-riots>

### Mononucleosis

Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mononucleosis>

Medline Plus - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000591.htm>

### Ryman Auditorium

Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryman\\_Auditorium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryman_Auditorium)

Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture -

<http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=R072>