Some questions to consider when evaluating information sources

- **What type of source is it?**

- **Who wrote it?**
  - Does the author demonstrate Expertise, Authoritativeness, or Trustworthiness (E-A-T)?
    - Are they trustworthy? Do they have visible credentials?
    - Do they have authority in this subject? Do they work in that field? Are they educated in the subject? Do they have related professional or personal experience?
  - Is the content user generated (wikis, internet forums, group blogs)?

- **Why was it written?**
  - Who is the intended audience?
    - Where was it published (A scholarly journal? A popular magazine?)
  - Is it sponsored?
  - Is the author trying to sell something?

- **Is the information accurate?**
  - Was the work peer-reviewed?
  - Does it cite other works?
    - What sources does the author use for getting their information?
    - Are there enough sources cited to support the claim(s)?
  - Does the tone of language seem unbiased?
  - Is the information current or up to date?

- **Does the source support the assignment?**
  - Is the content relevant or appropriate for the context of the assignment?
  - Does the paper need primary sources?
  - Does the paper need popular opinions on a topic?
  - Do claims in the paper need to be back with evidence? Are there scholarly resources to support this?

Some helpful definitions and tips

**Scholarly Journal Articles** – credible sources that have been written by an expert/academic in a field and reviewed by other experts in the same field

**Websites** – just because you found something on the Internet doesn’t mean it’s a website (eBooks are available online, but they are not considered websites)

**Peer-review** – the process or experts in a field evaluating work in the same field

**Primary sources** – first-hand accounts (examples include speeches, letters, photographs, autobiographies)

Ask for help if you aren’t sure – contact your librarians, Brianna Buljung (bbuljung@mines.edu) or Emily Bongiovanni (emilybongiovanni@mines.edu) for help evaluating sources