

Guidance document for critically appraising non-scholarly documentary sources

Scott criteria	AACODS criteria/questions	Yes	No	Score (Scott criteria)	Notes
Authenticity	Authority Identifying who is responsible for the content. Individual author: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated with a reputable organization (or association)? Professional qualifications or considerable experience? Produced/published other work (grey/black) in the field? Recognised expert, identified in other sources? Cited by others? (use Google Scholar as a quick check) Higher degree student under "expert" supervision? Organization or group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the organization (or association) reputable? Is the organization (or association) an authority in the field? In all cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the item have a detailed reference list or bibliography? 			5	
	Date For the item to inform your research, it needs to have a date that confirms relevance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the item have a clearly stated date related to content? No easily discernible date is a strong concern. If no date is given, but can be closely ascertained, is there a valid reason for its absence? Check the bibliography: have key contemporary material been included? 				
Credibility	Accuracy Does the item have a clearly stated aim or brief? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is so, is this met? Does it have a stated methodology? If so, is it adhered to? Has it been peer-reviewed? Has it been edited by a reputable authority? Supported by authoritative, documented references or credible sources? 			5	
Representativeness	Accuracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it representative of work in the field? 			5	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If No, is it a valid counterbalance? • Is any data collection explicit and appropriate for the research? • If item is secondary material (e.g. a policy brief of a technical report) refer to the original. Is it an accurate, unbiased interpretation or analysis? 				
Meaning	Objectivity			5	
	<p>It is important to identify bias, particularly if it is unstated or unacknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinion, expert or otherwise, is still opinion: is the author's standpoint clear? • Does the work seem to be balanced in presentation? 				
	Significance				
	<p>This is a value judgment of the item, in the context of the relevant research area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the item meaningful? (this incorporates feasibility, utility and relevance) • Does it add context? • Does it enrich or add something unique to the research? • Does it strengthen or refute a current position? • Would the research area be lesser without it? • Is it integral, representative, typical? • Does it have impact? (in the sense of influencing the work or behaviour of others) 				
Not applicable	Coverage				
	<p>All items have parameters which define their content coverage. These limits might mean that a work refers to a particular population group, or that it excluded certain types of publication. A report could be designed to answer a particular question, or be based on statistics from a particular survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any limits clearly stated? 				