**Evaluating Credible and Scholarly Scientific Sources**

**Week Two Assignment**

In this assignment, you will examine three different sources - one source that would be considered scholarly, one source that is credible but not scholarly, and one source that would not be considered credible for use in an academic paper. After completing a worksheet on each source, can you identify which is which?

**Instructions**

When looking up various scientific topics, including the example topic this week on technology and food production in the U.S., you will find all kinds of information out there. Not all of it is reliable. In order to determine if a source provides credible information, you will need to take the time to evaluate that source first before you can trust its content. Who is the intended audience of the source? Who is the author or publisher and what is their purpose for publishing the resource? These are examples of the questions you will want to ask yourself when evaluating a source.

Examine these three sources and fill out the following worksheet for each one. You will be determining what type of source it is (scholarly, credible non-scholarly, and non-credible), its level of credibility, and its possible value or use within the scientific conversation about technology and agriculture in the U.S.

To help you determine the credibility of a source, refer this quick video tutorial on [Evaluating Sources for Credibility.](http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/tutorials/evaluating-sources/) Additionally, consult the strategies outlined in the  [CRAAP TEST](https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf). **Keep in mind that you are evaluating the sources themselves and not the content within the source, or whether you agree with the positions or statements that are expressed within the source.** Please write your answers in complete sentences.

**Source Links**

**Source #1:** <http://www.saynotogmos.org/>

**Source #2:** <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0064879>

**Source #3:** <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/restrictions-on-gmos/usa.php>

**Source #1**

1. What best describes the information within this source (choose all that apply):

[ ]  Formal report of a study or academic analysis of an issue

[ ]  Fact sheet / data / statistics

[ ]  News

[ ]  Government or organizational website

[ ]  Opinion piece: expert? Journalist? amateur?

[ ]  Anecdote / personal experience

[ ]  Propaganda

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

1. Currency: For this topic, is the information…

[ ]  Up to date

[ ]  Outdated

[ ]  Not sure (explain):

1. The purpose of the information is to:

[ ]  Inform

[ ]  Persuade

[ ]  Entertain

[ ]  Sell

[ ]  Other:

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

1. Does the author provide reliable evidence to back up his or her assertions? How do you know? *(Tip: Look for references within the text or presented as a list. Ask yourself if the references are formally formatted and if they add weight and credibility to the discussion.)*

1. Who published this source?

[ ]  The author himself/herself [ ]  An academic journal

[ ]  A magazine [ ] A professional organization

[ ]  A government entity [ ]  Other(explain):

1. The point of view of this source seems to be

[ ]  Objective and impartial

[ ]  Biased

How did you make this determination? Provide a specific example from the source.

1. Authority: What is/are the author(s)’s credentials? Does he or she have college degrees?

Experience related to the topic? A job in the field? Previously published work in this area?

1. Based on the information above, do you feel the target audience for this source is or could be an

academic one? Why or why not?

9. Based solely on the information you have learned about this source, and not its content, do you

think this is a credible source? Explain why or why not.

10. In my opinion this source is…

[ ]  Scholarly

[ ]  Non-scholarly and credible

[ ]  Non-scholarly and not credible

**Source #2**

1. What best describes the information within this source (choose all that apply):

[ ]  Formal report of a study or academic analysis of an issue

[ ]  Fact sheet / data / statistics

[ ]  News

[ ]  Government or organizational website

[ ]  Opinion piece: expert? Journalist? amateur?

[ ]  Anecdote / personal experience

[ ]  Propaganda

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

1. Currency: For this topic, is the information…

[ ]  Up to date

[ ]  Outdated

[ ]  Not sure (explain):

1. The purpose of the information is to:

[ ]  Inform

[ ]  Persuade

[ ]  Entertain

[ ]  Sell

[ ]  Other:

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

1. Does the author provide reliable evidence to back up his or her assertions? How do you know? *Tip: Look for references within the text or presented as a list. Ask yourself if the references are formally formatted and if they add weight and credibility to the discussion.)*

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Experience related to the topic? A job in the field? Previously published work in this area?

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academic one? Why or why not?

9. Based solely on the information you have learned about this source, and not its content, do you

think this is a credible source? Explain why or why not.

10. In my opinion this source is…

[ ]  Scholarly

[ ]  Non-scholarly and credible

[ ]  Non-scholarly and not credible

**Source #3**

1. What best describes the information within this source (choose all that apply):

[ ]  Formal report of a study or academic analysis of an issue

[ ]  Fact sheet / data / statistics

[ ]  News

[ ]  Government or organizational website

[ ]  Opinion piece: expert? Journalist? amateur?

[ ]  Anecdote / personal experience

[ ]  Propaganda

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

2. Currency: For this topic, is the information…

[ ]  Up to date

[ ]  Outdated

[ ]  Not sure (explain):

3. The purpose of the information is to:

[ ]  Inform

[ ]  Persuade

[ ]  Entertain

[ ]  Sell

[ ]  Other:

What led you to choose this answer? Provide evidence or examples from the text.

1. Does the author provide reliable evidence to back up his or her assertions? How do you know? *( Tip: Look for references within the text or presented as a list. Ask yourself if the references are formally formatted and if they add weight and credibility to the discussion.)*

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[ ]  Objective and impartial

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How did you make this determination? Provide a specific example from the source.

1. Authority: What is/are the author(s)’s credentials? Does he or she have college degrees?

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1. Based on the information above, do you feel the target audience for this source is or could be an

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1. Based solely on the information you have learned about this source, and not its content, do you

think this is a credible source? Explain why or why not.

1. In my opinion this source is…

[ ]  Scholarly

[ ]  Non-scholarly and credible

[ ]  Non-scholarly and not credible