

How to Identify a Credible Source



1. Check the Credibility of Author

Check the author's credibility by doing a quick google search. Is the author respected in the field? Is the author affiliated with a credible publication? Does the author write about similar topics?¹ Some authors may be new to the field, but these checks are a great start.



2. Check the Credibility of Publication

Check the publication's credibility by doing some research. Does the source have a good reputation? For online articles, check the ending of the domain name:

- Websites that contain the suffix "lo" (e.g., Newslo) or that end in ".com.co" often contain false information for entertainment or other purposes³
- Websites ending in ".gov" or ".mil" are generally very reliable.² However, be aware of political websites as they tend to be strongly biased.
- Websites ending in ".edu" are usually reliable. ²
- Websites ending in ".com" and ".org" can be reliable sources, but can also have very biased views. Use caution when gathering information from these sites.²

Peer reviewed, scholarly journals, well established newspapers, and reputable, unbiased websites are great sources of information.²



3. Check the Bias of the Source

It is important to gather information from an unbiased source. Ask questions like:

- Does the source use language free of emotion?
- Is the information fact-based or opinion based?³
- Are there enough facts within the document to support the author's claim?³
- Why is the source providing this information?
 - Is it for entertainment? Is it to increase traffic to their website/ news station? Or is it for informational purposes?²
- Does the source acknowledge arguments from both sides of the issue?³



4. Check the Date of the Publication/Article

Is the information recent enough to be useful? Recent research is needed for some topics to provide accurate information. Examples of different topics that require up-to-date research include earthquake early warning systems, buildings designed with performance-based seismic design, and liquefaction mitigation.⁴ Be sure to check the date on the article and assess whether or not the information is recent enough for the topic in question.



5. Information

Is the information cited or did the source include a bibliography? Track down the reference and verify the information. Looking at the references may also provide a wealth of useful, related information. A lot of fake and misleading news and images are being shared across the internet. If it is a legitimate news story, the story will likely be covered by a reputable, well-known source.² When in doubt, fact check the information by finding the information from another credible source.



References

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