

# Guide to Being a Critical Consumer of Information



All it takes is an internet connection to post something online. It is important that you be able to distinguish between what is fact and what is fiction while searching for information online. This guide can help you determine whether a source can and cannot be trusted.

1. Check if the source is associated with a reputable institution (or one you're familiar with) such as a museum, university, scientific journals, or government agencies. You can easily find this on the web page either in the "About Us" section or at the bottom or top of the page.
2. Check the domain name
  - a. Some websites mimic the URL, design, and logo of reputable sources. Check the URL to make sure you aren't falling into this trap.
3. Check the date of the publication to ensure that the information provided is up to date.
4. Check for quotes (or lack of quotes) from experts or company and organization leaders.
  - a. If you are unsure about a quote, look up the person that was quoted. A simple search should provide other publications they've been quoted in and/or a short bio.
5. Recognize bias:
  - a. Recognize which points of view are put into a favorable light versus an unfavorable one.
  - b. Pay attention to the contradictions, inaccuracies, and the facts covered as well as the ones ignored.
6. Think about the social conventions and taboos being used to define issues and problems.
7. Check the facts in the source by looking at multiple sources of information. Don't rely on one source to give you the correct information, make sure that other publications have the same information to ensure that the information provided is correct and the most up to date.
8. Choose articles for their accuracy, depth, relevance, and clarity.
9. Look for alternative perspectives to get all of the relevant information.
10. Seek out a second source for the same topic to fact check.