

How do I find reliable information online and evaluate if sources are credible?

Glen French - 2020-06-30 - Research and finding academic information

Check out the resources below to learn how to recognise appropriate online content for academic study. Or, [book in](#) with a learning facilitator for 1-1 support.

[Evaluating sources for credibility](#) [3.14 min]

A good explanation of why it's important to use credible sources, produced by NC State University Library.

[Google and reliability using CAARP](#) [4.09 min]

See **evaluation in action** - produced by NMIT Library - demonstrates how to evaluate a range of websites for credibility.

[Information and activities from the Open University](#)

Learn how to avoid plagiarism, evaluate resources, find the best information and more.

Important questions to ask

Anyone can "publish" on the internet but how do you 'test' the source?

Authority

Who is the author of the site? Are their credentials stated? Are they considered an authority in that area? (It may be worth checking other resources to find this out) Do they give contact details? What is their purpose in creating the site?

Reliability

Check the domain in the URL. Is it from an educational institution (edu or ac), a government agency (gov or govt), or a commercial organisation (com or co)? What is the purpose of the site?

Currency

When was the site last updated? Is this stated?

Relevancy

Does the information provided by the site meet your research needs? Simply because it is on the internet does not mean it is the best source of information. Check with a librarian for other sources of information.

Comprehensiveness

Is the information on the site thorough? Does it provide information from a number of

perspectives or only one?

Accuracy

Is the information on the site accurate? Check against other sources of information if you are not sure.

Usability

How user friendly is the site? Is it quick to load and easy to find your way around? Does it have a search option that allows you to find the information you require?