

EVALUATING ONLINE RESOURCES

Evaluate online resources in the same way you look critically at any information

It can be hard to judge whether information on a website is real or fake but you can ask yourself some questions:

Where is this information from?

It's okay to research opinions, but are they based on verifiable facts?

Does it have references for its sources?

Can you find and check original source of information? Have the sources been quoted accurately and fully? Having read them, do you trust the website's analysis?

Has the information been double checked?

Information in academic journals has been read and checked by a researcher who is knowledgeable in that area. Assertions made online may have been investigated by fact-checking organisations.

What is the purpose of this resource?

This may not always be obvious, but think about the intent in putting this information online. Is it to educate? Entertain? Persuade? Sell? How can we tell?

Checklist for online resources:

Who made the website?

Look for an "About" page. You might find a link in the menu, or at the bottom of the page. The web address can give a clue: sites ending in **.ac.uk** or **.edu** are academic institutions.

Does the site have advertisements?

Many websites have adverts to pay for their costs. Look closely at these. Do advertisers have any influence over site content? This could be what is included or omitted.

Is this information up-to-date?

When was the website last updated? When was specific information added?

Where has this information come from?

Look for references. There might be a link to another site, or the name of a book or article. Click on the link, or try to find the source. Is the source credible? Has it been quoted accurately and in context?

Where to find help

Librarians can recommend reputable relevant websites.

Use a fact checking website such as:

<https://fullfact.org/> Focuses on UK

<https://www.factcheck.org/> US Politics

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/> Mainly US coverage

<https://www.politifact.com/> Gives 'truth-o-meter' ratings

Learn how to spot fake news

Check out these videos to spot fake news:

<https://youtu.be/AkwWcHekMdo>

https://youtu.be/cSKGa_7XJkg