FACT OR FICTION?

How to Spot Trustworthy Information Online

Tired of asking your friends or family how to find trustworthy information? You're not alone. **1 in 5 adults** in the U.S. has trouble finding, judging, and using information in their daily lives.

This is called ***informational analysis*** and is an important skill in our digital world where even fake information can seem real. Here are some tips on how to tell the difference between what is real and what could be fake:

- **Check the reputation of the source:** Who is telling you this information? Is it a respected organization or institution? Are they seen as experts on the subject? A good rule of thumb is to look for well-known news organizations, colleges and universities, government agencies, and trustworthy websites. These places are known for putting out reliable information and probably have multiple sources for any claim they make.

Sources:

https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/evaluating-online-sources

https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/faq/reliable

IMLS InfoLit Lesson Plan Developing Information Literacy Skills: Understanding Digital Literacy

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- **Check the author's credentials:** Once you've decided that the information is coming from a good source, look for the individual author's bio or profile. These tend to list a person's background and what expertise they may have on the subject. Think twice about the accuracy of the information if the bio is empty, the author isn't listed, or you can't tell if the person is actually an expert.

- **Double-check the truth of the information:** Check the information you find against other trustworthy sources to make sure it's real. If multiple reliable places are saying the same thing, it's more likely to be true. Be skeptical of information based on one person's experience instead of facts.

- **Make sure you're getting the whole story:** Look for signs of bias, like arguments that don't take the other side into account, language that would cause an argument at family dinner, or political agendas. If it seems like clickbait, it's probably clickbait.

- **Check the date:** Information may become outdated or change over time. Experts are discovering new things constantly and the source you're looking at could have been written before new information came to light.

While this may seem like a lot of work just to check that what you're seeing online is true, it's an important skill to have. **Research shows** that when people have access to accurate, easy-to-use information, they are more able to care for themselves and others.

In our world, with information often available at the touch of a button, it is important to make sure that everyone has access to that treasure trove and knows how to use it.

Learn more about how to teach yourself and those around you to spot fake information at **www.InformationLiteracy.gov**.