

# 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? 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 purposes<sup>3</sup>
- Websites ending in ".gov" or ".mil" are generally very reliable.<sup>2</sup> However, be aware of political websites as they tend to be strongly biased.
- Websites ending in ".edu" are usually reliable. <sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>2</sup>

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





### 3. Check the Bias of the Source

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

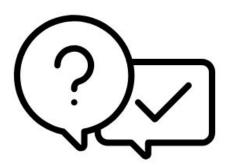
- Does the source use language free of emotion?
- Is the information fact-based or opinion based?<sup>3</sup>
- Are there enough facts within the document to support the author's claim?<sup>3</sup>
- Why is the source providing this information?
  - Is it for entertainment? Is it to increase traffic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



## 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> When in doubt, fact check the information by finding the information from another credible source.

#### Virtual Earthquake Reconnaissance Team (VERT) Last Modified March 2020



#### References

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