

Objective 12

Finding Accurate Information on the Internet

GETTING STARTED — WITH — TECHNOLOGY



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It is easy to read and share information online. Whether the information is intended to be humor, current events or sharing personal feelings through quote and memes, it is important to understand the context of information, as well as where it originated. The ability to verify sources and understanding the components of media literacy can prevent furthering misinformation.

Seeing something repeated in multiple ways can lead people to believe it as fact without fully looking into the topic. This can be amplified if the information is coming from someone close to the person reading it. In addition, websites or individuals appear to be reliable based on the way information is presented, or because of their influence.

Social media and news sites are often designed to get people to click links to view content on their website. Sometimes, that leads to misleading headlines or an embellished story to encourage people to click and share the link.

The nonprofit News Literacy Project offers these four tips to consider before sharing information:

1. Pause. Don't let your emotions take over
2. Glance through the comments. Has someone replied to this with a fact check?
3. Do a quick search. In the search bar, turn the claim you're checking into a question. Look for credible sources in the results.

TERMS TO KNOW

Misinformation

Misinformation is false information that is made to look like real credible stories. Articles containing misinformation are often posted on social media sites like Facebook and can be shared repeatedly. These stories (often referred to as fake news) try to look the same as real, factual news in order to mislead the reader.

It is important to be able to spot news containing misinformation. When information goes viral, it can seem more and more real because of the volume of people sharing the information. It is important to also consider your own biases when reading news. Our own biases can affect the way that we judge if information is true or false.

Media Literacy

The ability to determine the credibility of news and other information shared online, and to analyze the source and context to know what information to trust, share, and act on.

4. Ask for the source. Reply to the person who shared the post, asking for the original source or other evidence supporting the claim.

HOW THIS HELPS YOU

Developing a critical eye when reading information shared on the internet helps you understand messages and feel confident in the validity of the information you share.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Seemingly trustworthy people and websites can mislead someone. This could be intentional or not but spreading misinformation can cause real harm to the parties involved.

BEST PRACTICES

It is important to always do your own research when being presented with online materials. Thing to consider when reading information online:

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Investigate the site, mission, and contact info.

READ BEYOND

Headlines attempt to be enticing. What is the whole story about?

CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search. Are they credible and real?

SUPPORTING SOURCES

Are there links supporting the story?

CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old stories does not mean they are still relevant.

IS IT A JOKE

If it sounds too outlandish, it might be satire.

CHECK YOUR BIASES

Are your own beliefs clouding your judgment?

ASK THE EXPERTS

Consider a fact-checking site like www.snopes.com.

NOTES

RESOURCES

[News Literacy Project](https://newslit.org)

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[Center for Media Literacy](http://www.medialit.org)

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