

[THE SMELL TEST: A HANDY CHECKLIST FOR THE MEDIA SAVVY]

From: <http://mediashift.org/2013/02/dont-be-fooled-use-the-smell-test-to-separate-fact-from-fiction-online038/>

Not sure if a source is based on truth, fiction, or something in between?
Give it the SMELL Test! Circle the answers that best describe your source.

Source - Who are they?

Is the information clearly cited from a first-hand source?	YES	Sort of?	NO
Is the source free of preference and conflicts of interest?			
Does that source have relevant expertise on the topic?			

Motivation - Why are they telling me this?

Is the information clearly stated without persuasive language?	YES	Sort of?	NO
Is the source free of sales pitches and commercial interests?			
Does the source fairly present multiple sides or perspectives?			

Evidence - How are they supporting their assertions?

Does the source include at least one other source or reference?	YES	Sort of?	NO
Are factual claims supported with verifiable citations?			
Are data sets clearly presented in understandable formats?			

Logic - How did they come to this conclusion?

Is the evidence adequate to support the conclusions asserted?	YES	Sort of?	NO
Considering facts that I already know, does the information presented seem realistic and believable?			

Left Out - What are they NOT telling me?

Does the source try to present all relevant information?	YES	Sort of?	NO
If I search for the same topic from other sources, do they all provide basically the same information?			

➤ Where do most of my answers fall?

TRUTH	BIAS	FICTION
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➤ What is my overall analysis?

Is this information/source trustworthy?

Even with its flaws, could I use it to support my search purpose in some way (such as: discuss a particular viewpoint, provide a primary source, strengthen my own argument, etc.)?

■ BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOK: FAKE NEWS EDITION ■

get the full story at: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/breaking-news-consumer-handbook-fake-news-edition>

Does that web news article look a little... suspicious?
Check for **red flags** before you trust what you're reading!

- When visiting a new site, check the "About" page to learn more about them. Reputable sites have nothing to hide!
- ALL CAPS, or obviously photoshopped pics? These exaggerations could indicate a sensationalized or completely fake article.
- Overwhelmed by pop-ups, ads, and banners? That's click-bait, not news!
- Is the headline or story almost unbelievable? Check other reputable sites to see if they have covered it, too – if not, maybe it's because it never happened!
- Does the writer include real sources and factual references? If the information trail isn't credible, neither is the article!

Most importantly: If you're not sure it's true, DON'T SHARE IT!

Student Notes: