



Here's how... to assess online information

The internet is an instant source of valuable information on subjects children study or take an interest in. However, it is impossible to ensure everything on the internet is good quality.

Some sites contain information that is misleading, biased, badly written or just wrong. As a parent or carer you can play an important role in helping your children develop skills to discriminate between trustworthy and untrustworthy sites. Start with the questions overleaf.

1. Who owns the website?

Good websites will have a section called 'about us' or something similar, explaining who owns the site and what their aims are.

Choose a site and help your child look for the owner. Discuss whether you think they will be a reliable source of information or if they may be trying to sway the reader's opinions.

Look for clues in the web address:

.com and **.co** usually means commercial

.gov indicates a government site

.ac and **.edu** is a college or university site

.org is used by non-profit organisations.

2. Is the information correct?

How do you know? You can never be absolutely certain that what you are reading on the internet is accurate or truthful. It's up to you to decide – here's how...

3. Have you compared it?

Compare different websites for similar information. If they contradict each other, at least one of them must be wrong.

4. Facts or opinions?

If someone makes a claim, do they also provide any facts or sources to back it up?

5. Who do you trust?

After studying the different sites, which do you trust the most?

Still not sure? It may be best to stick with organisations you already know and trust from experience. Just look them up online to see what information they have on your subject.