



Here's how to evaluate information online

The internet is an instant source of valuable information on subjects children study, or take an interest in. It is impossible, however, 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 intentions 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 might 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?

Use more than one source of information. Compare what they say. If they contradict each other at least one of them must be wrong. Compare some more.

4. Facts or opinions?

If someone makes a claim, are they offering any facts or sources to back it up?

5. Who do you trust?

Having studied the different sites, who do you trust most?

Still not sure? It might 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.

