



How to find reliable and useful information on the internet

Searching the internet can provide answers to almost any question, and there are many useful sources of information and resources available by doing even a simple search. However, we need to be careful.

The internet includes a large amount of information. When it comes to an important topic like children's development, not all the information is of the same value. Some information comes from authors, collaborations or organisations that have a scientific or research background. Some information is commercial, it is trying to sell something. Some information is one individual's opinions.

How do you tell the difference between sites providing good information and sites that contain misinformation and are there to push a particular viewpoint, often without any evidence to back up what they are saying?

Here are some tips for finding reliable and useful information:

1. Look for sites backed by reputable organisations.

Look for sites associated with trusted organisations that have been around for a while and have a proven track record of reliability and integrity. Such sites may include those run by government agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, or universities.

2. Look for sites with expertise

You wouldn't go to an auto mechanic if you broke your leg, and you wouldn't go to the hospital to have your car repaired. This is an obvious point: look for websites that specialize in the kind of information you're seeking. For example, if you're wanting information on influenza, check out medical websites.

3. Be wary of commercial sites

Sites run by companies and business are more often than not trying to sell you something. And if they're trying to sell you something, chances are whatever information they're presenting will be tilted in favour of their product. That's not to say corporate sites should be excluded entirely. But be wary.

4. Beware of bias

Related to point 3 – be aware of potential underlying biases in the information presented. The more you know about the organisation or people presenting the information, the more you will be able to allow for biases, whether deliberate or unintentional.



5. Check the date

You need the most up-to-date information available. Look for a "last updated" date on the page or site.

6. Consider the site's look

If a site looks poorly designed and amateurish, chances are it was created by amateurs. Sloppy writing is another bad sign. Steer clear. But be careful: Just because a website is professionally designed doesn't mean it's reliable.

7. Avoid anonymous authors

Articles or studies whose authors are named are often—though not always—more reliable than works produced anonymously. It makes sense: If someone, or an organisation, is willing to put their name on something they've written, chances are they stand by the information it contains. And if you have the name of the author, you can always do a search on them to check their credentials.

8. Check the links

Reputable websites often link to each other. You can find out which other websites link to the site you're researching by conducting a link-specific Google search. Enter the following text into the Google search field, replacing "[WEBSITE]" with the domain of the site you're researching: link: [http://www. \[WEBSITE\].com](http://www.[WEBSITE].com). The search results will show you which websites link to the one you're researching. If lots of sites are linking to your site, and those sites seem reputable, that's a good sign.

References

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