

East Central University - Information Literacy Defined

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SCHUR*



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Information Literacy Defined

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East Central University

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Define information literacy

1. What this Book will Cover

This book acknowledges the changing information landscape, covering key concepts in information literacy to support a research process with intention.

We start by critically examining the online environment many of us already engage with every day, looking at the types of information sources to determine the credibility and reliability of said information utilizing author qualifications, Four Moves and a Habit, and the CRAAP (Currency, Relevance Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose) test.

Then, we explore bias, information disorder, and fact-checking, as well as ethical and legal use of information and why we cite.

Throughout the book, there will be knowledge checks, with a comprehensive quiz at the end to receive a certificate.

2. What is Information Literacy?

The Association of College and Research Libraries defines

information literacy as a “set of integrated abilities

encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued

and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning” (“Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education”).



Photo by David (DavidRockDesign) from Pixabay

Sources

“Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education”, American Library Association, February 9, 2015.

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework> (Accessed April 19, 2023)

PART II

TYPES OF INFORMATION SOURCES

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe different types of information sources
2. Recognize when it is best to use specific types of sources

3. Primary Sources

Primary sources are first-hand observations or experiences of an event. They can also be the original sources of information before they have been analyzed, such as statistical data sets or observation notes.

Examples of primary sources include:

- Eyewitness reports (interviews, photographs, video footage)
- Speeches, diaries, memoirs
- Empirical research
- Original documents, historical newspaper articles
- Literary works (novels, plays, poems), artworks



Eyewitness photograph: Protesters speak on the steps of San Francisco City Hall for a “Families Belong Together” rally.

- Tweets

Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders: Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*, as well as the following:

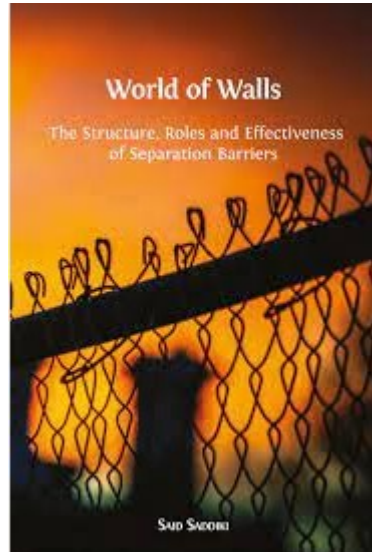
Image: “Families Belong Together SF march” by Pax Ahimsa Gethen is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

4. Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are created after an event occurred and offer a **review or an analysis** of the event; they provide an **interpretation** of the primary source or data without offering new data.

Examples of secondary sources would be:

- Biographies, nonfiction books
- Editorials
- Literary criticism and reviews
- Periodicals (such as scholarly journals, magazines, or newspapers)
- Retweets



World of Walls:
Nonfiction book
analyzing the
consequences of
the construction of
physical and virtual
walls.

Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders: Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*, as well as the following:

Image: “World of Walls: The Structure, Roles and Effectiveness of Separation Barriers” by Said Saddiki is licensed under CC BY 4.0

5. Tertiary Sources

Tertiary sources are compilations of information coming

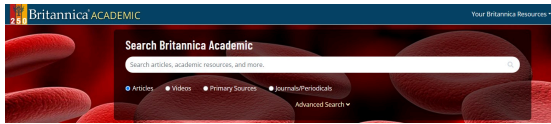
from secondary and primary sources; these can include lists

or collections, and are generally reference material that can

help you find, or direct you to, secondary and primary sources.

Examples of tertiary sources include:

- Encyclopedias, dictionaries
- Indexes
- Databases, catalogs
- Most textbooks



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shot of
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Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders: Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*

6. Information Source Formats and Knowledge Check

Traditional

- Books
- Periodicals
- Academic/Scholarly Journal Articles
- Magazine Articles
- Newspaper Articles

Media

- Documentaries
- Radio Programs (Broadcasts and Interviews)
- Television Programs (News and Educational Programming)

Online

- Wikis
- Blogs
- Podcasts

Let's check your knowledge:



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<https://open.ocolearnok.org/ecokinformationliteracy/?p=498#h5p-16>

PART III

DETERMINING CREDIBILITY

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Explain why gathering background information is important to the research process
2. Navigate to the appropriate information sources for background information
3. Use search strategies to find resources that are relevant and credible

7. Author Qualifications

Determining the **credibility** of an author is important to the overall value of your research. Doing background research to gain understanding of who wrote the material and if they are qualified to do so is taking the necessary steps to being a responsible researcher. This section will help you ask the right questions before you use someone else's data to support your work.

There are several questions that should be considered before you decide to quote an author.



Photo of professor and renown author, Dr. Ken Hada, by Brandi Schur

Who wrote the material? What qualifies them to do so? Do they have a degree? Is the degree in the field of research? Have they published other works? Is their work reviewed by other scholars? Where do they work? Do they have other relevant experience?

Researching an author or organization is a vital part of responsible research. The following activity will help you practice asking the right questions before utilizing a source.

8. Four Moves and a Habit

Anytime you come across and use information you should check its credibility and reliability. One strategy you can use to help you do that is four moves and a habit. The four moves of this strategy are:

1. **Check for Previous Work** – Look around to see if someone else has already fact-checked the claim or provided a synthesis of research. A great example of this step is provided in Mike Caulfield’s “Investigate the Source” video.



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<https://open.ocollearnok.org/ecokinformationliteracy/?p=331#oembed-1>

2. **Go Upstream to the Source** – Go “upstream” to the source of the

claim. Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information. A great example of this step is provided in Mike Caulfield's "Find the Original Source" video.



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3. **Read Laterally** – Read laterally. Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source (publication, author, etc.). The truth is in the network. A great example of this step is provided in Mike Caulfield's "Look for Trusted Work" video.



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<https://open.ocolearnok.org/ecokinformationliteracy/?p=331#oembed-3>

4. **Circle Back** – If you get lost, hit dead ends, or find yourself going down an increasingly confusing rabbit hole, back up and start over knowing what you know now. You're likely to take a more informed path with different search terms and better decisions.

Throughout the process of finding and checking information, you may find yourself feeling some strong emotions. Whether those emotions stem from anger or confusion a great habit to learn is recognizing those emotions, taking some time to slow down or take a step back, and then remembering to use the four moves above.

Sources

This section includes material from the source chapter, *Four Moves* by Mike Caulfield and Kristin Conlin, found in *Strategic Information Literacy*, licensed as CC BY 4.0, as well as the following:

“Online Verification Skills – Video 2: Investigate the Source.” *YouTube*, uploaded by CTRL-F, 29 June 2018.

“Online Verification Skills – Video 3: Find the

Original Source.” *YouTube*, uploaded by CTRL-F, 25 May 2018.

“Online Verification Skills – Video 4: Look for Trusted Work.” *YouTube*, uploaded by CTRL-F, 25 May 2018.

9. CRAAP Test

Another strategy you can use to assure any information you use is credible is the Currency, Relevance Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose (CRAAP) Test. The CRAAP test is a list of questions that you can ask yourself to determine if the information you have found is reliable.

Currency – The timeliness of the information. Some questions to ask yourself to determine the currency of the information you have found are:

- When was the information created?
- Has the information been updated before?
- Based on your needs, is it out-of-date?

Relevance – The importance of the information based on your needs. Some questions to ask yourself to determine the relevancy of the information you have found are:

- Does the information relate back to your topic or answer your question?

- Is the information at the appropriate content level?
- Who is the intended audience?

Authority – The source of the information. Some questions to ask yourself about the source of the information you have found are:

- Are the author's credentials or affiliations provided?
- Does the author's background qualify them to write on the topic of the information?
- What does the URL reveal?

Accuracy – The reliability of the information. Some questions to ask yourself to determine the accuracy of the information you have found are:

- Does the information contain any references?
- Can you verify any of the information provided?
- Are the sources that are cited scholarly?

Purpose – The reason the information exists.

Some questions to ask yourself about the purpose of the information you have found are:

- Is the information a fact or opinion?
- What is the purpose of the information (persuade, inform, entertain, etc...)?

Source

Blakeslee, S. (2010). Evaluating information—Applying the CRAAP test. Retrieved from http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf

10. Determining Credibility Knowledge Check



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<https://open.ocolearnok.org/ecokinformationliteracy/?p=701#h5p-52>

PART IV

BIAS

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Recognize and analyze author bias
2. Describe confirmation bias and how it can affect your research
3. Utilize methods to avoid bias as a consumer or producer of information

11. Author Bias

Probably all sources exhibit some **bias**, simply because it's impossible for their authors to avoid letting their life experience and education have an effect on their decisions about what is relevant to put on the site and what to say about it.

But that kind of unavoidable bias is very different than what is known as author bias. **Author bias** is an outright effort to shape the information



Photo by Brett Jordan from Unsplash

presented on a site (or other sources) into a persuasive advertisement for something important to the author. Authors can find many ways to do this such as:

- Pretending to present facts while only offering opinions
- Presenting information that is one-sided

- Using words that can cause a negative or positive response

The examples above can cause a source to lose its integrity because the author would be sacrificing the value of the information in order to persuade readers to view things as the author does.

Sources

This section includes material from the source chapter, “Degree of Bias” by Teaching & Learning, Ohio State University Libraries, found in *Choosing and Using Sources: A Guide to Academic Research*, licensed as CC-BY 4.0

12. Confirmation Bias

While looking for information that fits your needs, you have to pay attention to not only the information you are reading but also what is going on in your own mind.

That's because one of the things that can get in the way of identifying biased information is our own biases. Sometimes the things that look most correct to us are the ones that play to our own biases. That impulse that we all can get to find and take in information that coincides with what we already think is called **confirmation bias**.



Photo by Christine Hume on Unsplash

Some steps you can take to avoid confirmation bias are:

Avoid asking questions that imply a certain answer. If

you ask, “Did the Holocaust happen?,” for example, it is implied that the Holocaust was faked. If you want information on the Holocaust, sometimes it’s better just to start with a simple noun search, e.g. “Holocaust,” and read summaries that show how we know what happened.

- **Avoid using terms that imply a certain answer.** As an example, if you query, “Women 72 cents on the dollar” you’ll likely get articles that tell you women make 72 cents on the dollar. But if you search for “Women 80 cents on the dollar” you’ll get articles that say women make 80 cents on the dollar. Searching for general articles on the “wage gap” might be a better choice.
- **Avoid culturally loaded terms.** As an example, the term “black-on-white crime” is a term used by white supremacist groups, but is not a term generally used by sociologists, nor do statistics support this claim. As such, if you put that term into the *Google* search bar, you are going to get some sites that will carry the perspective of white supremacist sites, and be lousy sources of serious sociological analysis.

Sources

This section includes material from the source chapter, Confirmation Bias by Mike Caulfield and Kristin Conlin, found in Strategic Information Literacy, licensed as CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

13. Clues About Bias

Provided below are some clues you can look for when you are investigating whether or not a source contains any bias information.

Coverage

Unbiased: This source's information is not drastically different from coverage of the topic elsewhere. Information and opinion about the topic do not seem to come out of nowhere. It does not seem as though information has been shaped to fit.

Biased: Compared to what you have found in other sources covering the same topic, this content omits a lot of information about the topic, emphasizes vastly different aspects of it, and/or contains stereotypes or overly simplified information. Everything seems to fit the site's theme, even though you know there are numerous ways to look at the issue(s).

Citing Sources

Unbiased: The source links to any earlier news or documents it refers to.

Biased: The source refers to earlier news or documents but does not link to the news report or document itself.

Evidence

Unbiased: Statements are supported by evidence and documentation.

Biased: There is little evidence and documentation presented, just assertions that seem intended to persuade by themselves.

Vested Interest

Unbiased: There is no overt evidence that the author will benefit from whichever way the topic is decided.

Biased: The author has a “vested interest” in the topic. For instance, if the site asks for contributions, the author probably will benefit if contributions are made. Or perhaps the author may get to continue his or her job if the topic that the website promotes gets decided in a particular way.

Imperative Language

Unbiased: Statements are made without strong emphasis and without provocative twists. There aren’t many exclamation points.

Biased: There are many strongly worded assertions. There are a lot of exclamation points.

Multiple Viewpoints

Unbiased: Both pro and con viewpoints are provided about controversial issues.

Biased: Only one version of the truth is presented about controversial issues.

Sources

This section includes material from the source chapter, “Degree of Bias” by Teaching & Learning, Ohio State University Libraries, found in *Choosing and Using Sources: A Guide to Academic Research*, licensed as CC-BY 4.0

14. Recognizing Bias Knowledge Checks



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PART V

DISINFORMATION & FACT-CHECKING

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Identify the psychological, physiological, and sociological effects of disinformation
2. Identify effective strategies for fact-checking sources
3. Investigate a source of information to determine reliability
4. Find better coverage for a source of information

15. Information Disorder and Knowledge Check

Claire Wardle, a world-renowned expert in the areas social media, user generated content, and verification, has used “information disorder” as an umbrella term for the various types of false, misleading, manipulated, or deceptive information we have seen flourish in recent years. She also created an **essential glossary for information disorder**, with definitions for related words and phrases.

What is **Information Disorder**?

Google defines it as: “The sharing or developing of false information with or without the intent of harming and they are categorized as misinformation, disinformation and malinformation.”

- **Misinformation** is information that is false, but not intended to cause harm.

For example, the person sharing or creating it believes it to be true because they are emotionally connected to the information.

- **Disinformation** is false information deliberately and often covertly spread in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth.

For example, the person sharing or creating it knows the information is false.

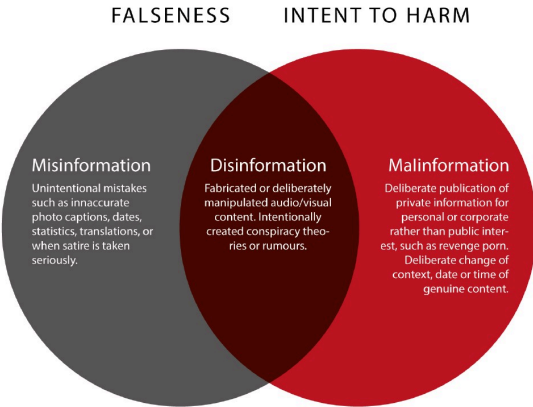
- **Malinformation** is information that is true and factual, but it is intentionally conveyed in order to inflict actual harm or cause the imminent threat of actual harm on a person, organization or country.

Similarly, Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines misinformation as "the act of giving wrong information about something" and disinformation as "false information that is given deliberately."

The graphic below illustrates the scale and

range of intent behind false information, from unintentionally inaccurate to deliberately deceptive and harmful. For a much more detailed explanation of each form of information disorder, from “satire” to “fabricated content” to “false context,” see First Draft’s Essential Guide to Understanding Information Disorder.

TYPES OF INFORMATION DISORDER



*Types
of
Information
Disorder
graphic
by
Claire
Wardle
&
Hossein
Derakshan*

Knowledge Check



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Sources

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“First Draft’s Essential Guide to Understanding Information Disorder” by Claire Wardle is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Image: “3 Types of Information Disorder” graphic by Claire Wardle & Hossein Derakshan is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Google. (2023). *Information disorder*. Google search. Retrieved April 14, 2023, from https://www.google.com/search?q=information%2Bdisorder&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS993US994&oq=&aqs=chrome.5.35i39i362l7j46i39i175i199i362.252294204j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.

“Misinformation.” *Misinformation Noun – Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*,

www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/misinformation?q=misinformation. Accessed 11 July 2023.

“Disinformation.” *Disinformation Noun – Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* at [oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/disinformation?q=disinformation](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/disinformation?q=disinformation). Accessed 11 July 2023.

16.

Fact-Checking and Knowledge Checks

What is fact-checking?

Fact-checking is the process of verifying the factual accuracy of information to prevent inaccurate content from being spread or published.

Why fact-checking?

When you find a source of information, how do you know if it's true? How can you be sure that it is a reliable, trustworthy, and effective piece of evidence for your research? This section will introduce you to a set of strategies you can use to quickly and effectively verify your sources based on the approach taken by professional fact-checkers. Fact-checking is a form of critical, investigative inquiry that can minimize

your own susceptibility to misinformation and disinformation and help you to avoid spreading it to others. As an introduction, please watch the following video, which discusses why fact-checking information is vital for filtering out bad information.



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How can you know what information you can trust? Below are some reputable fact-checking sites.

Fact-Checking Sites

The following organizations are generally regarded as

reputable fact-checking organizations focused on U.S.

national news:

- Politifact.com

- Factcheck.org
- Fair.org
- Washington Post Fact Checker
- Snopes.com
- OpenSecrets
- Truth be Told
- NPR Fact-Check

Respected specialty sites cover niche areas such as climate or

celebrities. Here are a few examples:

- Climate Feedback
- SciCheck
- Quote Investigator

There are many fact-checking sites outside the U.S. Here is a

small sample:

- El Sabueso/The Hound (Mexico)
- BBC Reality Check (UK)
- Full Fact (UK)

Knowledge Checks



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Sources

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“Fact-Checking Sites” by Mike Caulfield, found in *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers*, licensed as CC BY 4.0, as well as the following:

“Inform Your Thinking: Episode 7 – Fact Checking.” *YouTube*, uploaded by

OkStateLibrary, 3 August 2018. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

PART VI

ETHICAL AND LEGAL USE OF INFORMATION

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

1. Describe the value in respecting the original ideas of others
2. Define plagiarism and how one can responsibly and ethically use information
3. Recognize that students are active participants and creators of scholarship, not just consumers of information

17. Contributing to the Conversation

As a college student, whenever you complete an academic assignment, be it a research paper, a speech, or any other assignment in which you gather and synthesize information on a topic, you are participating in what is called a **scholarly conversation**. The term scholarly conversation describes the existing body of knowledge about a topic. This body of knowledge may include published books, presentations, research articles, conferences, discussions, online resources, and more. Your assignments are a way to add your own voice to the scholarly conversation—by reviewing what research has been done, drawing connections and conclusions from published information, and adding your own experiences, opinions, and ideas about what previous research has shown.



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Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*, as well as the following:

“Inform Your Thinking: Episode 1 – Research is a Conversation.” *YouTube*, uploaded by OkStateLibrary, 18 May 2016. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

18. Why We Cite

When we engage in conversations with other people, we often say things like, “I heard on the news today that...” or “The cashier at the store said...” When we do this, we not only back up and further support the point we are trying to make, but we also give more credibility to what we are saying by letting others know the origin of the information. It is also a good idea to let others know where our information came from when engaging in a scholarly conversation. A citation is a mention to another source and the phrase “citing your sources” means you’ve communicated the sources of information that you’ve used in your own work.

It is unethical to use somebody else’s information in your own work and not cite where you got that information (see section on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity, next). As long as you give credit to others’ **intellectual property**, using information from others’ to support your own thoughts, opinions, and research findings is good practice. Not only does it acknowledge the hard work of others,

but it also shows that you did your research on the topic, you know what information exists about it, and you can integrate your knowledge into the existing research and contribute to the scholarly conversation.

The following video by the Linscheid Library at East Central University has a great summary of what citations are and why we use them:



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Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*, as well as the following:

“Why Cite?” YouTube, uploaded by Linscheid Library, 14 June 2023. Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

19. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

When you use the words and ideas of others in your own work without citing where you got that information from, this is considered **plagiarism**. Whether a student purposely tries to pass off information as their own (i.e., copying and pasting text or paraphrasing another source without giving credit) or does so unintentionally (i.e., not knowing how to cite sources), plagiarism goes against the moral and ethical code for students called **academic integrity**.

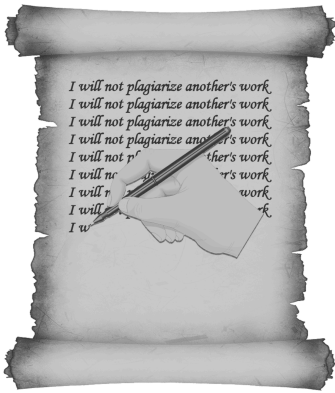


Photo by Evangelos
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Academic integrity is the expectation that all students will be honest and responsible and will not plagiarize or cheat and that they will be motivated by more than just getting good grades. Most colleges have

consequences for violating academic integrity, which may include suspension or expulsion from the institution. For more information, you can view ECU's Academic Integrity Pressbook titled, "*Academic Integrity at East Central University*" or the University website for the official policy.

Sources

This section includes material from the source book, *The Insiders: Information Literacy for Okies Everywhere*, as well as the following:

“Plagiarism.” *Merriam-Webster*, 11 July 2023.

Conclusion

After completing the knowledge assessments and final quiz, the hope is that you are better equipped to understand, interpret, and verify sources of information that you will encounter during your academic, professional, and personal research endeavors.

A common thread runs through each section:

- We engage with information every day!
- Knowing how to find and use information for coursework, work or our personal pursuits is essential.
- Having strong information literacy skills will make you a more thoughtful and effective consumer and creator of information.
- Asking key questions will not only help you



*Photo of Linscheid Library
by Brandi Schur*

verify credibility and reliability of sources but whether the information is relevant.

- Remembering all sources exhibit some bias, simply because different authors have different backgrounds, experiences, and educations and these can influence us all.
- Understanding the effects of information disorder and what biases are present for the author as well as in your own mind should help you interpret whether you should use or share information.
- Taking the necessary steps, i.e., verifying, checking and answering key questions, is important because it helps us all to become responsible researchers and contributors.

Glossary

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the expectation that all students will be honest and responsible and will not plagiarize or cheat and that they will be motivated by more than just getting good grades.

Author bias

An outright effort to shape the information presented into a persuasive advertisement in favor of the author's views.

Bias

Being in favor of or against one thing, person, or group, usually in a way that is unfair to the opposing viewpoint.

Confirmation Bias

The collection of evidence that supports what one already believes, while ignoring

or rejecting evidence that supports a different conclusion.

Copyright

A form of protection for intellectual property that is automatically applied to any creative work that is placed in a fixed, tangible format. Copyright in the United States lasts for the life of the creator plus an additional 70 years after their death.

Credibility

the quality of being trusted and believed in.

Disinformation

"False information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the express purpose to cause harm. Producers of disinformation typically have political, financial, psychological, or social motivations." *Definition from "Information Disorder: The Essential Glossary" by Claire Wardle.*

Fact-Checking

Fact-checking is the process of verifying

the factual accuracy of information to prevent inaccurate content from being spread or published.

Fair Use

An exception to copyright in which you can use a copyright-protected work without getting permission from the creator.

Information Literacy

An integrated set of skills, practices, and dispositions that prepare students to discover, interpret, and create information ethically while gaining a critical understanding of how information systems interact to produce knowledge. Information literacy aims to help students navigate the information landscape not just for college courses but beyond—in the workplace, in their personal lives, as lifelong learners, and as news consumers, creators, and voters. *Definition from “Information Literacy in the Age of Algorithms” by Head, Fister, and MacMillan.*

Intellectual Property

Describes an expression of the human mind that can be owned and protected once it is placed in a fixed, tangible format. Intellectual property can be protected by trademark, copyright, patent, etc.

Malinformation

"Genuine information that is shared to cause harm. This includes private or revealing information that is spread to harm a person or reputation." *Definition from "Information Disorder: The Essential Glossary" by Claire Wardle.*

Misinformation

"Information that is false, but not intended to cause harm. For example, individuals who don't know a piece of information is false may spread it on social media in an attempt to be helpful." *Definition from "Information Disorder: The Essential Glossary" by Claire Wardle.*

Plagiarism

According to Webster's Online Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as “stealing and passing off (the ideas or works of another) as one's own.

Primary Sources

First-hand observations or experiences of an event. The original sources of information before they have been analyzed or summarized. Examples include: speeches, autobiographies, and empirical research.

Scholarly Conversation

The term scholarly conversation describes the existing body of knowledge about a topic.

Secondary Sources

These are sources of information created after an event has occurred and offer a review or analysis of the event. They provide an interpretation of a primary source or data. Examples include:

biographies, nonfiction books, and literary criticism.

Tertiary Sources

These are compilations of information coming from primary and secondary sources. Examples include: encyclopedias, indexes, and most textbooks.