How to Use Your Fake News
Secret Decoder Ring!

Fake news is all too real! How can you be certain if the web page you're using for a class project is factual or something a teenager in Macedonia has posted to rake in lots of denars? Use these techniques to evaluate online news BEFORE you cite it!

Avoid sites with odd domain names. Carefully check info from URLs that include "real," "patriot," "free," and "liberty." Avoid URLs that end in .com.co. NBC.com.co is fake, but NBC.com is not.

1   **What's the web address (URL)?**

Do you recognize the source? If you want a page you can cite, select info found on reputable news sites such as CBS News, the New York Times, Associated Press News, CNN, and National Public Radio.

2   **Find news on sites you recognize**

Have other reliable news sites posted the item? Breaking news may not have much detail or accuracy. Keep checking it. If it's available only on social media or sites you don't recognize, it probably is fake.

3   **Is this news on other sites?**

Is an author listed? Did he/she post a list of credentials? Search Google to see if you can find other sites with info about the author. Is there an About Me/Us page that explains the purpose of the website?

4   **Who wrote it? Why was it posted?**

Pew Research reports 67% of Americans got news on social media sites in 2017. This makes these sites ideal places to post fake news. Be sure to double-check any news you find on a personal blog.

5 Avoid social media and blogs

Is the headline and/or text of the news story you're checking FILLED WITH CAPITAL LETTERS and exclamation points!!! – the online equivalent of shouting? Back out and look elsewhere.

6 Overuse of CAPITALS and !!!!

Dr. Melissa Zimdars, an associate professor of communication and media at Merrimack College, has created a list of sites that distribute misleading news: https://is.gd/fakenewssites

7 Check the prof's fake news list

Consult a librarian in person or by phone.
GCC Main : 623-845-3112
GCC North: 623-888-7112
Ask a Librarian 24/7 chat: Look for the chat box on the Library's home page

8 Seek professional help

When in doubt, use the CRAP test!

C = Currency - How up to date is the info? Is it still accurate?

R = Relevance - Who is the intended audience? Is the info at an appropriate level? Have you tried other sources?

A = Accuracy & Authority - Is the headline alarmist? Are there links to sources? What are the author's credentials? Can you confirm the info elsewhere?

P = Purpose & Point of View - Is the info based on facts, opinions, or propaganda? Do you detect a biased point of view or is the info objective and impartial? Are there ads? Is the author trying to sell something?