

PowerSearchingWithGoogle.com


Lesson 5.4: Locating information about who owns a site

[Access Lesson 5.4 slides here](#)

Contents:

- *Methods for discovering who owns a website and who the authors are*
- *Using a website name in quotes to find reviews*

This is lesson 5.4. and in this lesson we're going to be talking about how to find other information to sort of back up, to verify, to understand the credibility of the things that you're finding when you do your web searches. So this is about, for example, how do you find out about a site, who owns that site, how do you find out about an author, what kinds of things do they write about?

When you want to find out more about...

Typical situation...

- you've been doing a bunch of online searching, and you've found some interesting content, ... but...
- How much should you believe what you've found?
- How to get background information on a web site?


How do we find out about the stuff that we find online? Let me show you some methods for doing that. The typical situation is you've been sitting around doing your research on whatever your topic is and you'll land on a webpage and you think to yourself, how much should I believe this, should I believe the author, the site, do

I believe the stuff they've been writing about, are they an expert on this topic or are they just making stuff up. You want to understand this because this is important to validating the credibility, that is, how much you should believe anything you find online. So, let me show you some methods for getting background information about a particular website or a page or an author.

Many approaches (and they change)

Google

1. Who owns the site?



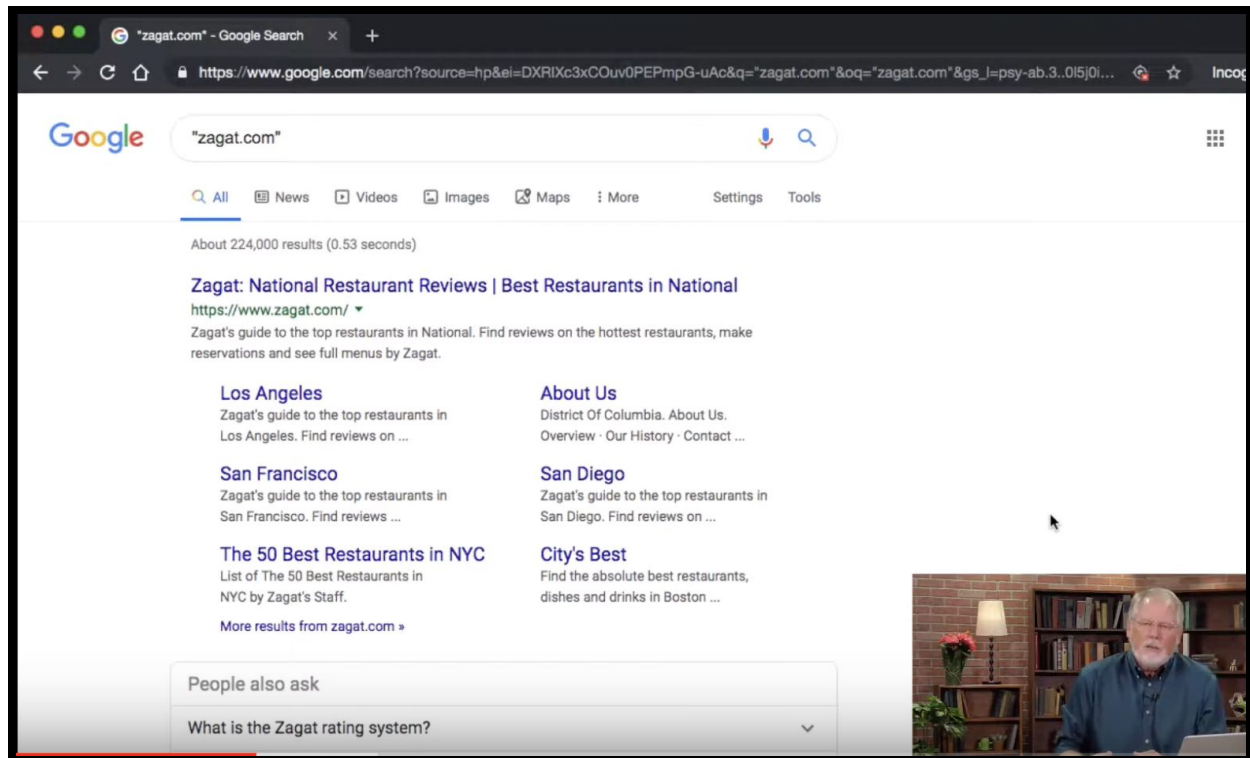
The first question you should ask is who owns the website, who owns the content that's being produced that you found? One easy way to find out is just do the single query for the website's name in double quotes.

1. Who owns the site?

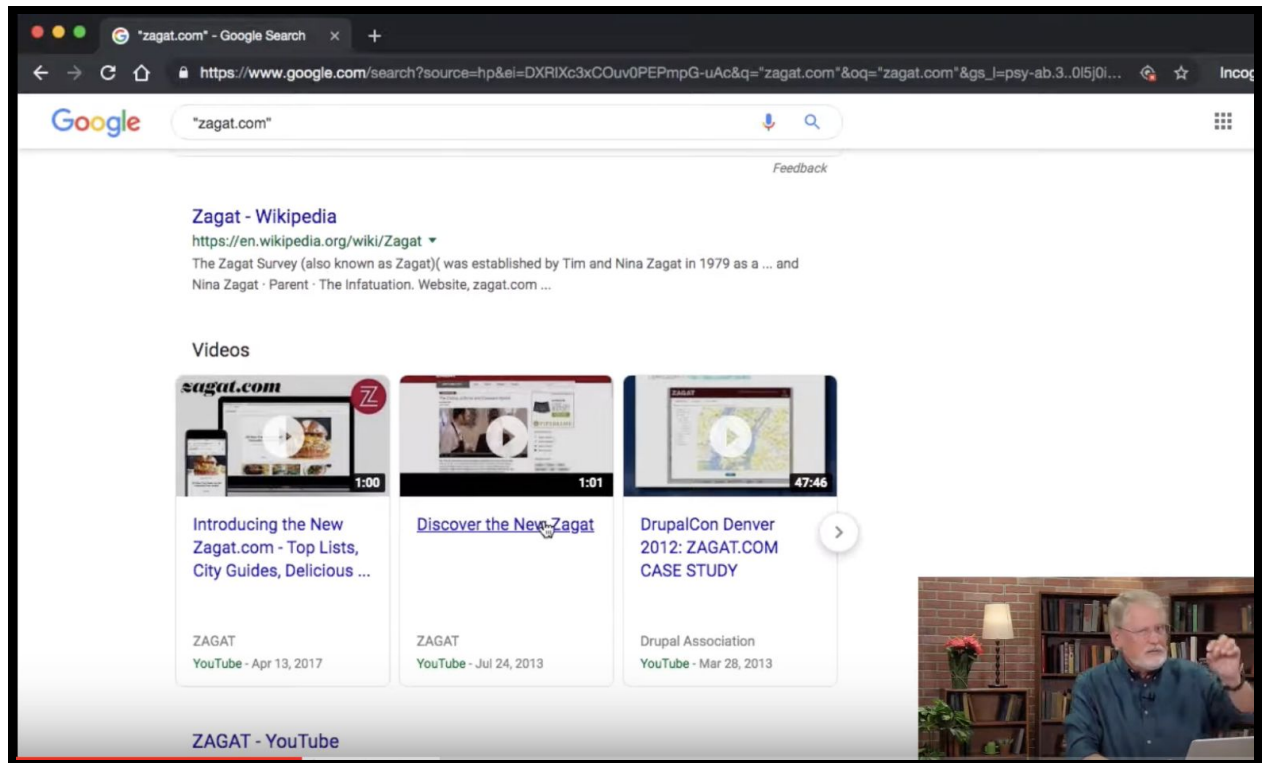
[*“site”*]



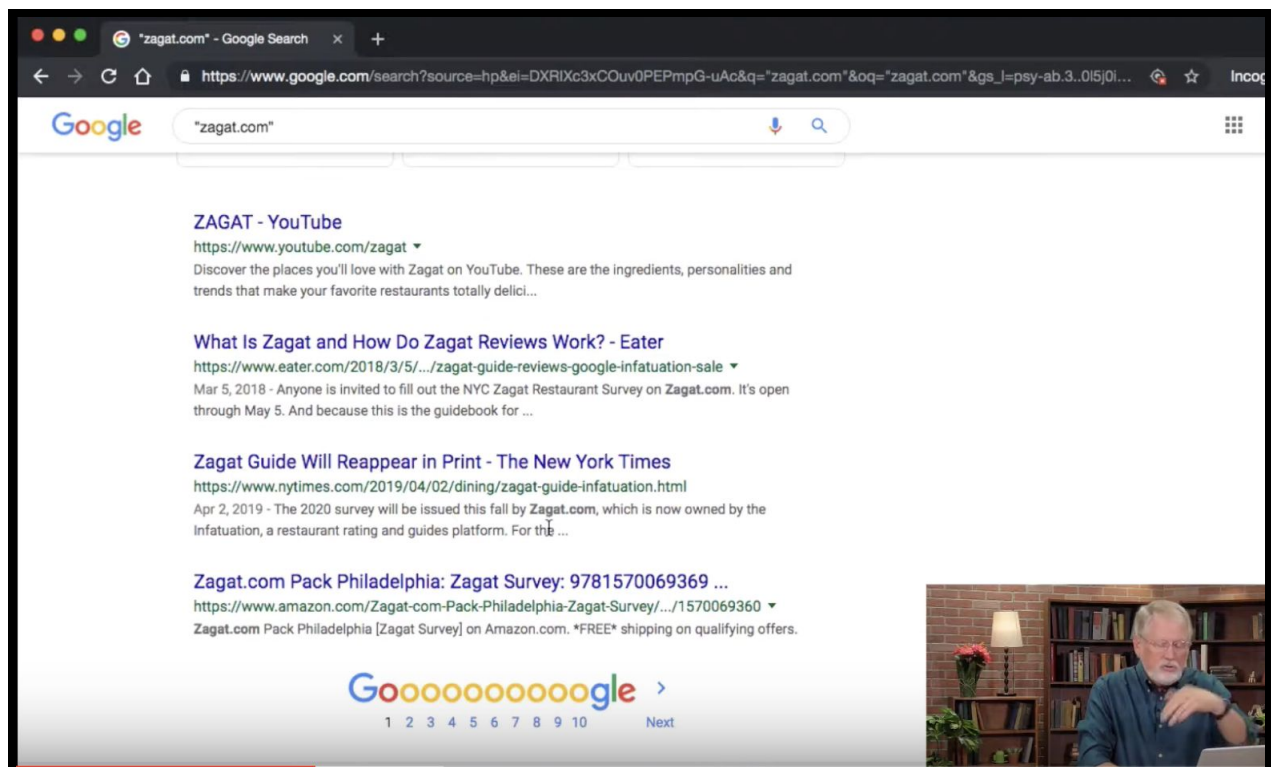
Let me show this to you live because it does something you might not expect. Suppose we're going to do something to try to understand a page that we found on Zagat.com. What is the Zagat.com?



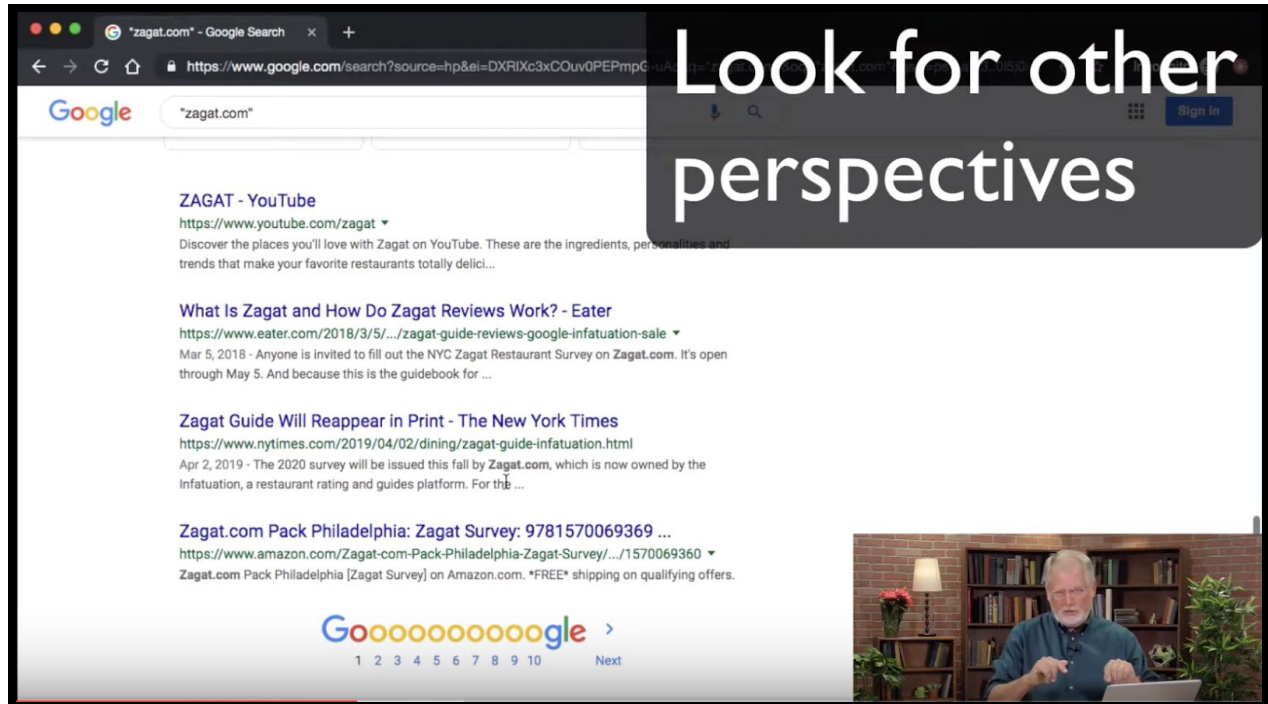
Here I've done the query in double quotes, what this does is it searches for ["Zagat.com"] as a string, in a website or on a web page. So here we've got Zagat.com as a token, as a symbol, as a thing we're looking for.



So naturally the first result is Zagat.com, no surprise there, but below that you can see there's a Wikipedia article about it.



There's some videos, there's a YouTube channel from Zagat and now near the bottom we can start to see reviews of Zagat, commentary about Zagat, something that allows you to triangulate, to get a different perspective on Zagat that's not published by Zagat itself.



So that's important because when you're trying to do these evaluations you're looking for other perspectives so you could go to the about page on the Zagat.com website and they will tell you their story.

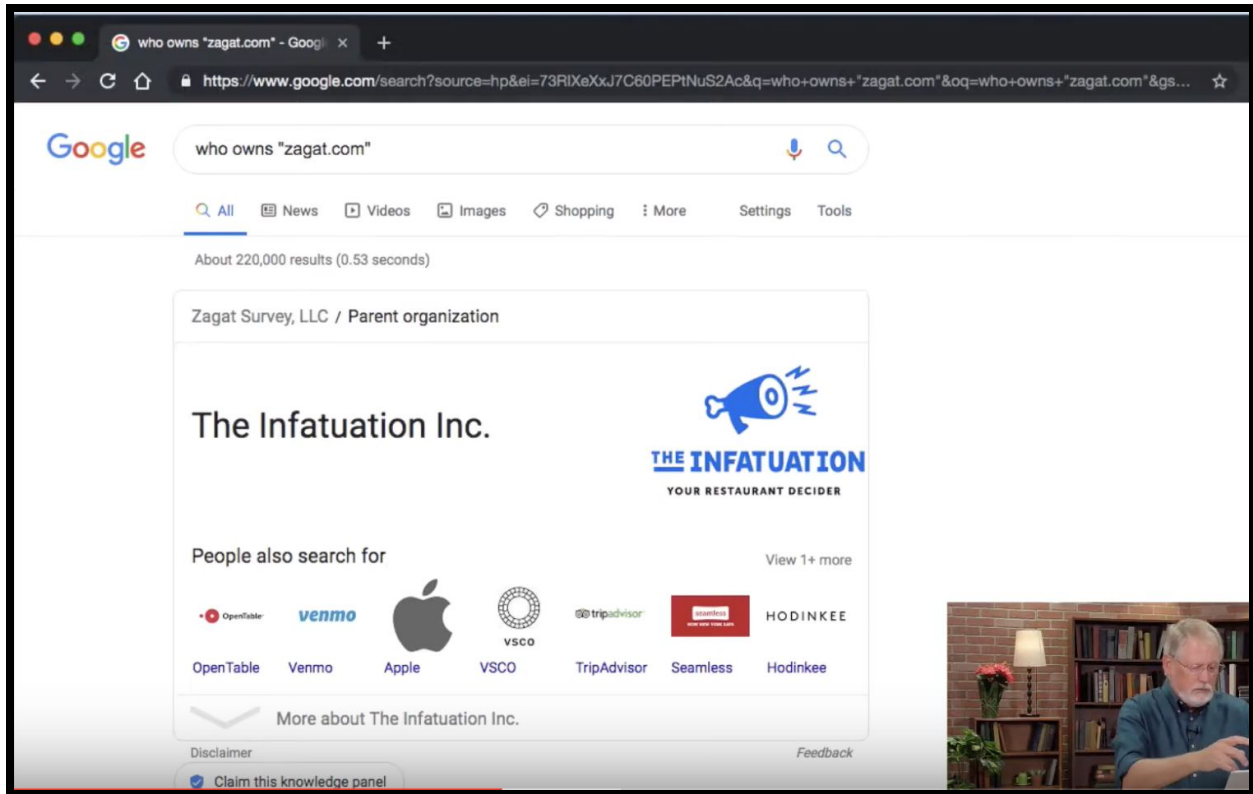
1. Who owns the site?

[*“site”*]

[who owns *site*]



Maybe that's valuable, but it's also valuable to look for other perspectives and doing this double quote trick often is a way to get to other perspectives on that site. Another way to establish this information about a site is to ask, well who owns that site?



So the query [who owns and then site name] works remarkably well. Let me show you who owns the Zagat.com and now you can find out very quickly through this big result at the very top that that site is owned by The Infatuation company as you see here. Now this trick works really really well and it's particularly interesting to find out because company ownership will sometimes change from moment to moment, so you might remember as Zagat was owned by another company in the past.

The image shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "who owns zagat.com". Below the search bar, there is a section titled "People also ask" with four questions: "What company owns Zagat?", "Is Zagat owned by Google?", "Who started Zagat?", and "Who owns infatuation?". Each question has a downward arrow icon. Below this section is a "Feedback" link. The search results show a link to "Zagat: National Restaurant Reviews | Best Restaurants in National" with the URL "https://www.zagat.com/". Below this is a link to "About Us - Overview | Zagat" with the URL "https://www.zagat.com/about-us". A large, semi-transparent dark grey box with white text is overlaid on the bottom left of the search results, containing the text "Or.. website name". To the right of the search results, there is a small inset image of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. Behind him is a bookshelf filled with books.

Google

who owns "zagat.com"

People also ask

What company owns Zagat?

Is Zagat owned by Google?

Who started Zagat?

Who owns infatuation?

Feedback

Zagat: National Restaurant Reviews | Best Restaurants in National
<https://www.zagat.com/>
Zagat's guide to the top restaurants in National. Find reviews on the hottest restaurants, make reservations and see full menus by Zagat.
New York City · Los Angeles · San Francisco · About Us

About Us - Overview | Zagat
<https://www.zagat.com/about-us>
A mix of user-generated content and our own expertise, all the information on the website serves one purpose: to help you find the perfect restaurant (s).

About Us - Our History | Zagat
<https://www.zagat.com/about-us/our-history>
Frustrated by the lack of information on the Zagat website, Nina Z...

Or.. website name

Zagat - Wikipedia

This will give you pretty up-to-date, pretty accurate information. It's a very simple thing to do: who owns company name. Now it's also worth remembering that that may not work for all companies because company ownership is often complicated, so in the US you might have to go to the recording of a company ownership by state. So what you find in California is not the same as what you find in Delaware and that's going to be different depending on country, but there are different methods to do that, but this works pretty well.

1. Who owns the site?
2. Who writes on the site?



The second big thing you want to understand is: what kind of person writes on that site. So if a site is composed of a set of web pages, well who authored the web pages and how can you find out?

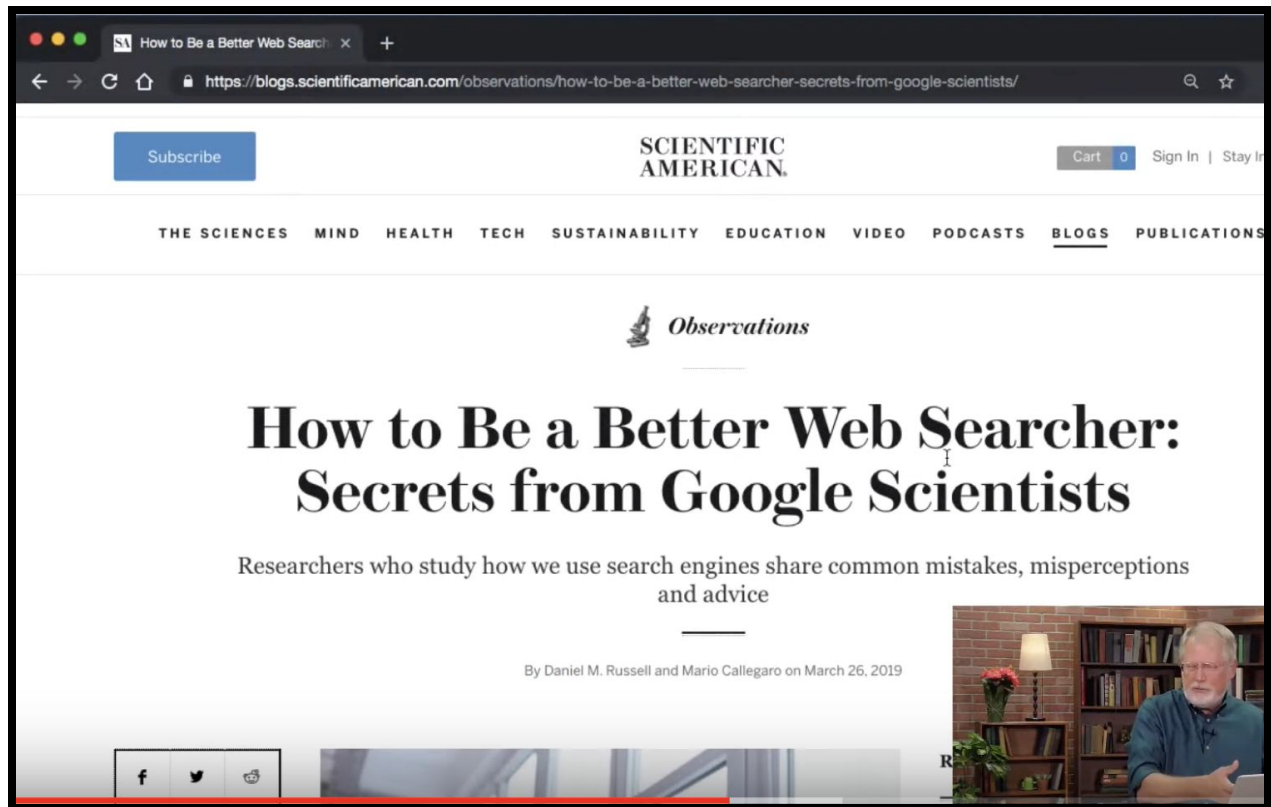
1. Who owns the site?
2. Who writes on the site?

Look for background information on the author.

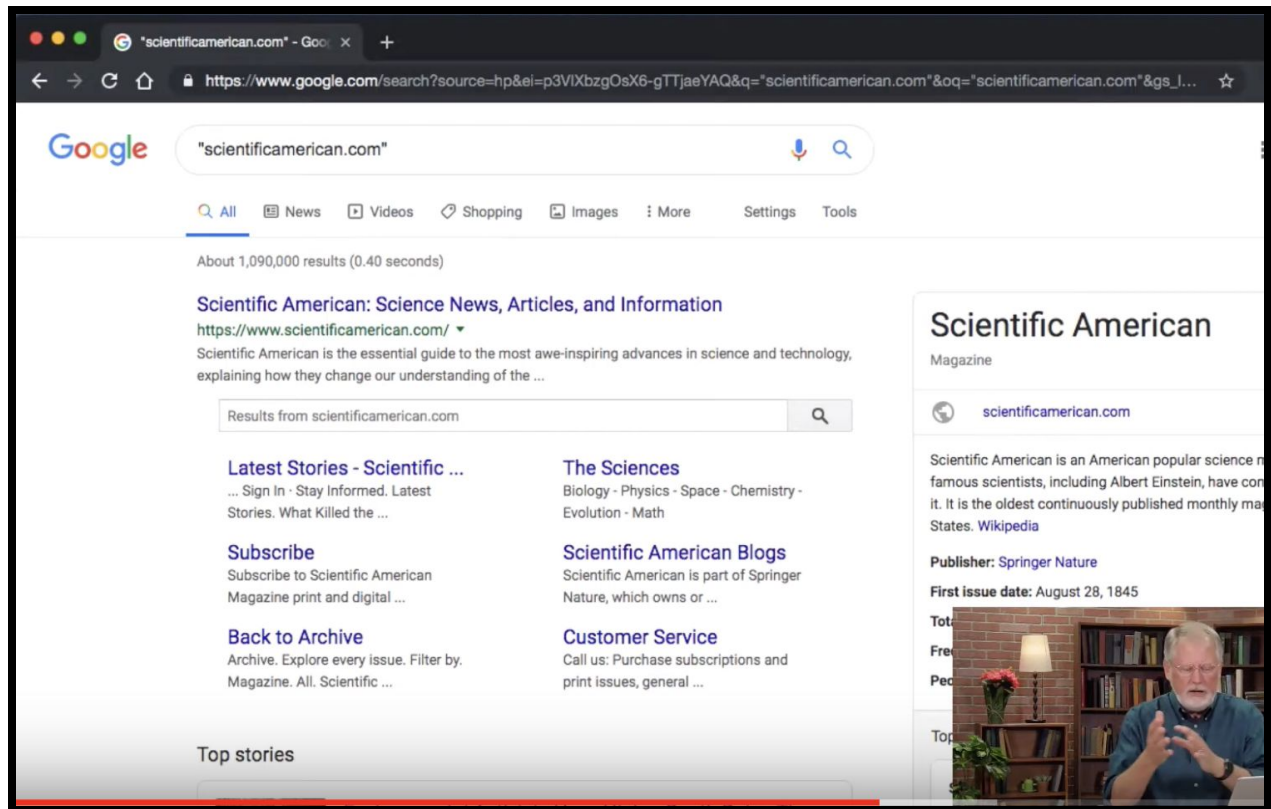
[*author's name*]



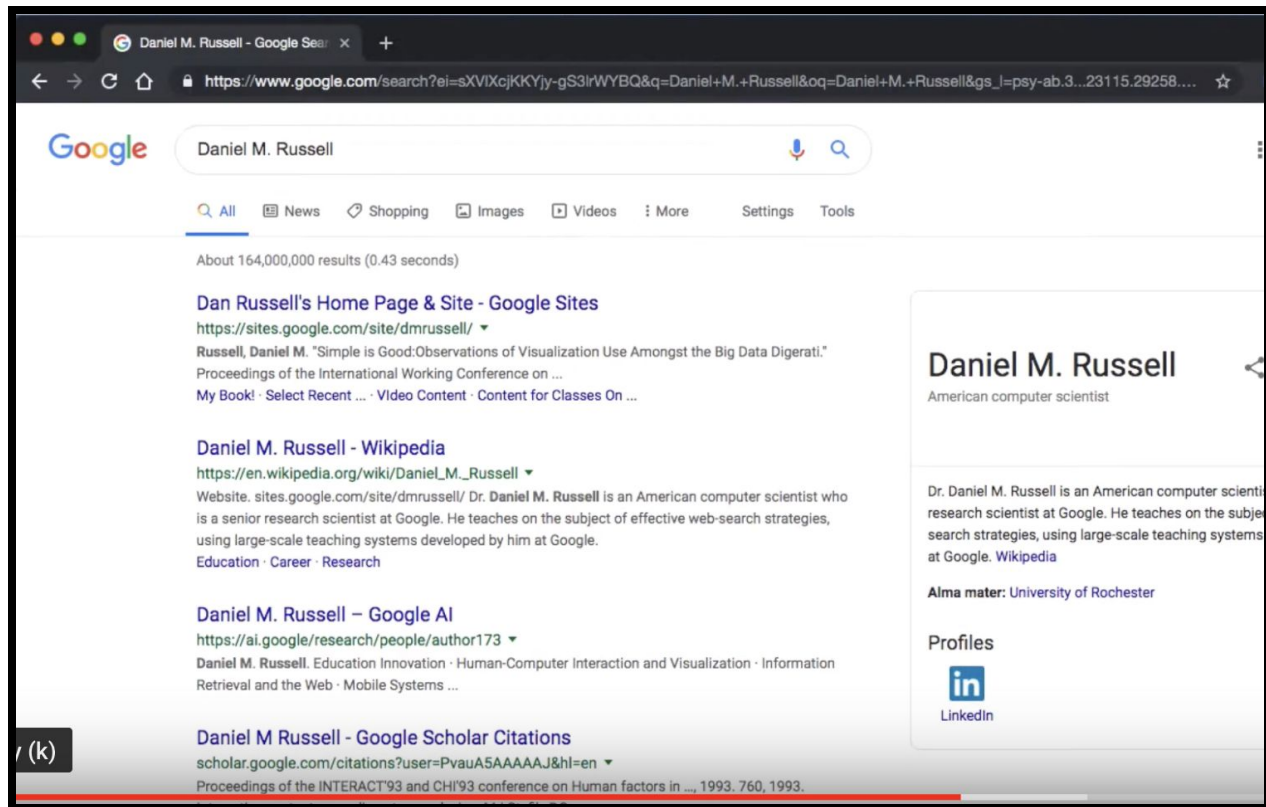
A really useful thing to do is to find background information on the authors and so the easiest way to do that is to search for the author's name. So let me give you an example using me.



In your research you might have found this paper, in this case from Scientific American. So importantly this article was written by these two co-authors down here: Daniel M. Russell, that would be yours truly and my colleague Mario Callegaro. So what you'd like to find out is a little bit of information about ScientificAmerican.com and you can do what we did before to find out a little bit about that and you want to find out about this author Daniel Russell. But note the name here in the byline is Daniel M. Russell and that's the one you want to use. Don't use an abbreviated version of that because when authors write they want to use their name in one form, not four or five different forms and yes my name comes in multiple forms but I only ever publish under one name.



So let's try them, so the first thing I'm going to do is to search for information about the website and here again we see the panel on the right hand side and a lot of information about this website. There's a Wikipedia article about it, there's a LinkedIn entry to it and so on and so on.



There's a lot of information about that site, great it looks credible to me but what about that dubious named author Daniel M. Russell? What we're going to do here is search for just like that, just the way you saw it in the byline. When we do that you find on the right hand panel side, a knowledge panel about that person, about me. On the left you see all kinds of things including their homepage, their professional affiliations, a Wikipedia article, scholarly citations and so on and so on. There's a lot of stuff here that says I suspect this guy actually writes a fair bit, he writes about these particular topics so with respect to this topic it's probably a credible author. Of course you might want to check out for example, who is this organization MITPress.MIT? Check until you get to a point where you recognize an authoritative resource. What you're really doing is working backwards until you establish something that you can believe in, something that you understand, something that you recognize.

1. Who owns the site?
2. Who writes on the site?
3. Are there reviews of this site?

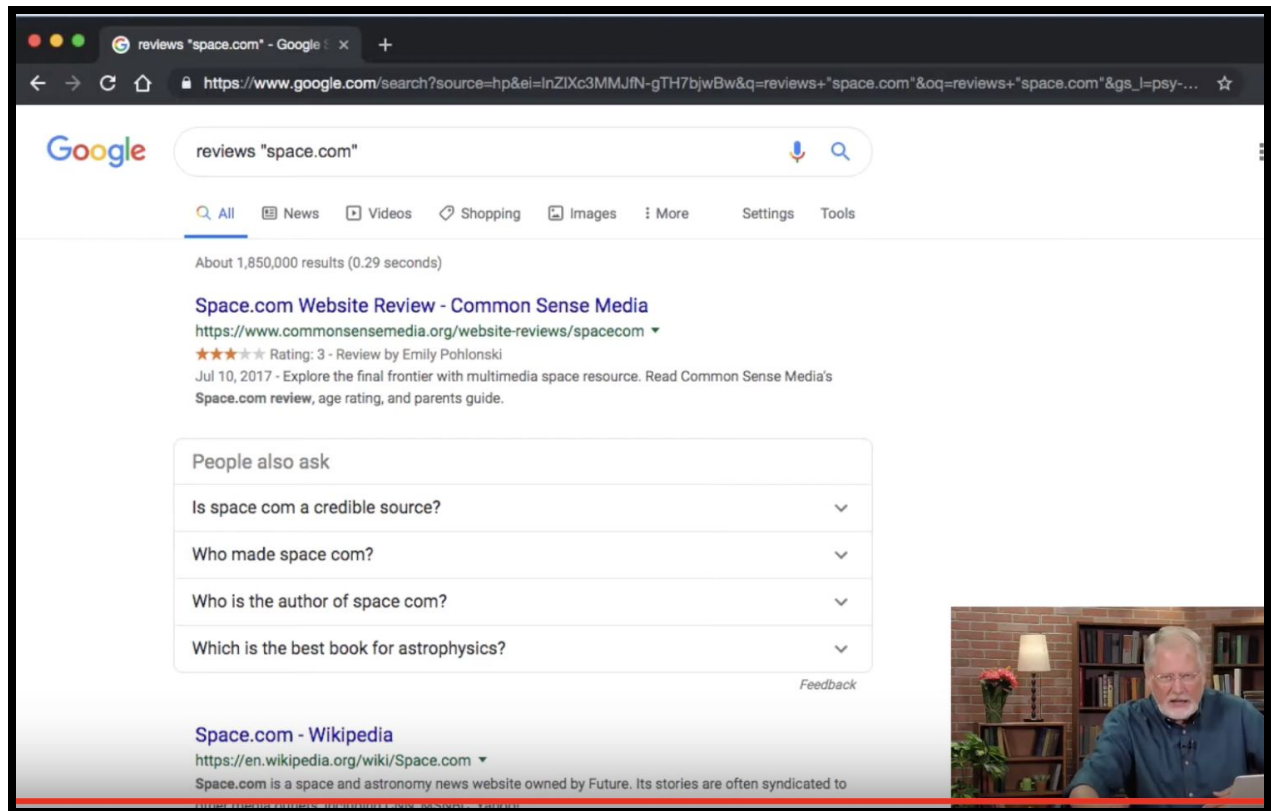
Check out reviews of the site:

[review *website name*]



Of course what you'd like to understand is about this site. We've talked about who owns the site, that's one thing. We talked about who writes on this site, that's another thing. Another way to find information, to triangulate again on the credibility of a resource is: Are their reviews of that site? So for example we can do a query like this: [review website name].

Let me illustrate this, so one of the things you might have discovered in your research is an article on a site called space.com. Now I've seen that site before, but maybe you haven't, you'd like to understand, should I trust this site? If so, are they really expert on interstellar space or are they an organization that understands how to maximize space in your house.



These are very different notions of space, so what I'm going to do is ask for [reviews "space.com"] like that. So what I'm now going to see are reviews of that site written by other people. So in this case we can see that space.com is reviewed by Common Sense Media, there's an article in Wikipedia, you can find other articles about space.com. So it's important to be able to look at other different perspectives asking for the context term review or reviews. That's a great way to get that additional information. Okay, we've looked at different ways of getting information about the author, the website, the ownership and these all color or give you a perspective on the content that you're reading. So look at it critically and try to figure out who owns what and whether or not you can understand their perspective. If you find for example that website is owned by a well-known conservative organization you might want to take that into account. Likewise if you find that this website that's owned by a very extremist conspiracy theory site, you might want to take that into consideration when you're reading their content as well. Now armed with these methods you can go ahead and do the activities in this lesson, have fun.

