THE POWER OF THE CLICK AND TELL

EXAMINING THE UNDERSIDE OF EVERYTHING WE FIND ONLINE

The world's online community spends 35 billion hours online each month engaging in a range of activities. Searching and reading information is one of the most popular online activities, rivaled only by social networking and email. For many, the Internet is one of the fastest sources of information that we have at our fingertips. But just how much we trust the power of instant click-and-tell?

INFORMATION BY THE NUMBERS

The explosion of smartphone and tablet owner is matched by the rise in the number of websites being populated everyday on the Internet. Just in the month of March 2012, over **31.4 million** new websites were registered.

That's:
1 million per day

Over **40,000** per hour

Almost **700** per minute

TRUTH, LIES OR FICTION?

Always check your facts! Not everything you read online can be trusted. In fact, the sheer amount of information online means that hoaxes, scams, and biased information can easily be mistaken as facts. For a quick fact check, always review with the 5-Finger Test:

5-FINGER TEST

Authority: The source of information.

- Is there an author?
- Is the author qualified to talk about this topic?
- Is the institution, organisation or author recognised in the field of your research topic?
- Is there an address to contact for more information?

Accuracy: The reliability of the information.

- Are information sources cited and listed in a clear manner so that they can be verified?
- Is the information presented in correct grammar and spelling?
- Is it free from other errors?
- Is there information on the website that you suspect is wrong?

Currency: The timeliness of the information.

- When was it written?
- When was the webpage updated?
- Are the links still working or have they expired?
- Is it stated clearly how old is the information?

Coverage: The relevancy of the information.

- Is the information related to your research topic?
- Does it help to answer your question?
- How broad and how in-depth was the topic coverage?
- Does it lead to locating other related information?
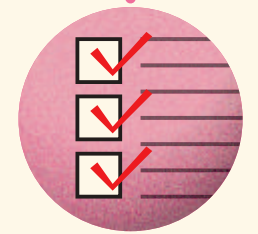
Objectivity: The reason the information exists.

- Is the information one person's opinion, and if so, is it biased?
- Is the information provided as a public service or is it affiliated to an organisation with a private agenda?
- Does the information appear impartial, and does it acknowledge other perspectives?
- Is there advertising on the webpage that is related to the research topic?
- Did the information exist to inform, educate, propagate, persuade, advise, advertise or entertain?