

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A HOAX WEBSITE?



1. SOURCE

Decoding the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) or the website address:

Some bogus sites use a URL that is similar to the actual one – this is used to direct careless users to a cloned website in a scam known as typo-squatting.

For example, previously, there was a fraudulent site called www.momgov-sg.com. This was a near replica of the Ministry of Manpower's actual site (www.mom.gov.sg) and the fake website was taken down.

You should be alert and verify if the URL is real or not.

Generally, websites from .gov (government) and .edu (education) tend to be more reliable. Be more careful when handling .com (commercial) websites as anyone can create a .com website easily.

3. RESEARCH

Cross check the website

It is always good to get a second opinion. Use a trusted website which you know to be reliable and cross check the answers there (e.g. for news articles, you can use www.channelnewsasia.com or www.straitstimes.com).

You can double check with a librarian at NLB or your teachers or your parents.

2. UNDERSTAND

Read the contents of the website carefully

Adopt a sceptical mindset and ask if the information on the website is real or fake. As a general rule, if it sounds too good to be true then it usually is.

Look out for spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes as this is usually an indication of poor quality control.

Watch out for factual errors as well (E.g. Wrong date? Wrong figures? Wrong details?).

4. EVALUATE

Look for objectivity

What is the motive of the creator of the website? Can the website creator be clearly identified and can he be contacted for further information?

Is the website objective (appealing to the reason) or subjective (appealing to the emotions)?

Does it contain opinions or hard facts?

By being alert and using the 4 ways of S.U.R.E (Source, Understand, Research, Evaluate), you will be less likely to be fooled by a hoax website!

To read more on S.U.R.E. infographics, please visit nlb.gov.sg/sure/infographics