TRAFFIC LIGHT PROTOCOL FOR SOURCES

🟩	Acceptable	• Peer reviewed journals and articles (IEEE, ACM, etc.) • Books (academic/ professional) or relevant global newspapers, news networks, and magazines (including their websites) that contain verifiable[1] information, substantive, & hopefully factual articles. • PhD or master's dissertations, theses and scholarly research (papers, talks, presentations, etc.) • Government or military research, reports, laws, statistics, policies, strategies, websites, etc. • Technical bulletins, FAQs, product documentation, manpages, etc. • Publications by recognized industry or professional organizations ○ e.g., the annual 'Verizon Data Breach' report or vendor security advisories are acceptable, but documents produced by a relatively obscure or unknown vendor or company should be treated with skepticism until you confirm their legitimacy through source validation – i.e., has anyone heard of them before? If so, are they reputable/knowledgeable? Or sketchy/clueless?
🟨	Use Caution	• Tweets, toots, social media, forums, videos, or blog posts, unless material is used as a direct quote by an expert or provides technical or analytical data insights needed to substantiate your research. Use sparingly. • *Forbes.Com*: for technology-related items, their content tends to be mostly click-baity and sensational versus informative. • Sites or reports from 'thinktanks' or industry organizations. Despite presenting potentially useful information, many often have biased agendas, even if they claim to be 'non-partisan' or 'represent the industry' in their activities and publications. When in doubt, ask!
🟥	Unacceptable (NEVER USE)	• Quora, TechTarget, SearchSecurity, Technopedia, & related document/paper/presentation 'aggregators' (often the first 'hits' when you Google something) • The dictionary or encyclopedia • Wikipedia entries are acceptable as a starting point to help you generate ideas, but are not deemed an acceptable reference source (unless you're writing about Wikipedia.) If anything, look at the sources contained in Wikipedia entries, which may provide pointers to better primary-sources.

[1] 'Verifiable' means that similar information is being conveyed by traditional mainstream news organizations. This should be more than simply repeating the same points/quotes: i.e., are other news entities confirming the story and/or adding extra details through their own investigation and analysis of the issue? Does the site 'own up' and publish corrections to articles when errors are reported or discovered by staff or readers?

(Reminder: In bibliographies, always cite the actual *source* – not the database/library you accessed it from)

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