

DOING ONLINE RESEARCH: THE BASICS

Researching online is fraught with peril! Crazy people are out there, making up crazy stuff, and presenting it as “fact.” Don’t fall for it.

Before you use any website for research, you must ask and answer the following questions:

- Is the site associated with a reputable institution like a museum, historical society or university? If you do not recognize the name of the institution or organization, Google it. What do you find out?
- Can you identify the individual or organization responsible for the site, and are the proper credentials displayed? Is their contact information prominently displayed? Is it clear and reliable? Google the names of the individuals listed. What do you find out?
- Is the information provided on the Web site, including text and images, properly cited?
- What can you discern from both the incoming and outgoing links to the site?

From Kevin Levin, “The Remedy for Fake News? History Teachers,”
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/remedy-spread-fake-news-history-teachers-180961310/#KM6X8vb13BbLEwbV.99>