Investigate the Issue

There is a lot of false information out there and spotting it can be hard to do. Take some time to consider the source and see what others are saying about the issue. If you can't confirm the content is accurate, don't share it.

Start by asking yourself the following questions.

Is the Source Credible?

Look at the site's "About" page to see whether it includes detailed information, such as its values, ownership, location, funding, and contact information.

What are Other Sources Saying?

Search the issue on trustworthy sites. If the facts reported by credible sources don't align with the content you're reviewing, don't share it.

What are Fact Checkers Saying?

It's easy to believe things that confirm our personal views. If a claim seems too good to be true, see whether a trustworthy fact-checking source has evaluated it and provided additional context. Find a list of sites to help fact check at ChecktheSource.iowa.gov.

Is Your Investigation Neutral?

Make sure you are using unbiased search language and remain open-minded to evidence that might contradict your beliefs.

Does the Source Acknowledge Other Perspectives?

Most hot-button issues are complicated. Although all authors have their own viewpoint, credible sources will recognize other perspectives and provide factual context around the issue. Bad actors won't.

Does the Content Provoke a Strong Reaction?

If the content makes you feel shocked, angry, or sad, consider that its purpose may be to get you to respond emotionally and share it without confirming its accuracy.