Question the Source

Do some digging on who is really behind the information and think about what they gain by making people believe it. False information is often designed to appear authentic, so it's important to take a critical look to determine if it's trustworthy.

✎ Check the Author

Research the author's credentials. What else have they published? Are they qualified to cover the topic? If the content doesn't include an author's name, it might be false information.

📅 Check the Date

When was it published? Outdated content can lack important context, making it irrelevant to current events and misleading to someone reading it in the present.

💬 Check the Message

What is the content really saying? False information often pushes a single viewpoint, takes an emotional tone, and uses attention-grabbing headlines that may not match the actual content.

🔍 Check for Facts

Consider how the author supports their arguments and whether they address counterarguments. Opinions without evidence may not be accurate. Trustworthy fact-checking sites, including those listed on ChecktheSource.iowa.gov, can help evaluate claims.

👥 Check the Sources

Credible content will cite supporting sources and provide additional resources for more information. Click on source links to make sure they work and support the content.

☑ Check the Quality

False information is often hosted on low-quality websites. Look for signs, such as many ads; questionable sponsors; poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation; and suspicious URLs that mimic legitimate news sites.