9 questions to help you evaluate the credibility of news sources

By Vicki Krueger • November 2, 2016

Whether you're covering the news or reading/watching/hearing it, the credibility of your sources is key to evaluating the information. Do you trust the sources? Are there enough sources? Enough knowledgeable sources? Are all the questions answered? Is the news credible enough?

Here are questions you should ask in evaluating the sources used in information you read, see and hear:
• Who is the source of this information? Is that clear to the audience, or might the source simply be the person reporting the news?
• What would this source know? Does he or she have training in the area? A job title that would indicate knowledge?
• When did the source get this knowledge? Recently? So long ago that situations might have changed?
• Where did the source get this knowledge? Does he or she have a degree in this field? Training? Work experience? Was the source involved first-hand? If so, does this make his or her views more credible ... or less?
• Why use this source? Does he or she have the necessary expertise to be trustworthy? Does this fill in a gap in the audience's understanding?
• How transparent is the reporting? Can the audience determine the sources of information and why they are good choices?
• How does this source know this information? Could I confirm the source's information through government records, other documents, further reporting or other sources?
• What is the past reliability and reputation of this source?
• What is the source's motive for providing the information? What does this source have to gain or lose? Will this information make the source look better, worse, guilty or innocent?

_Taken from_ Sources, Verification and Credibility, a self-directed course at Poynter NewsU._

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