

Check it's For Real: Family Activity

Not everything your child comes across online is true or reliable. The tricky part is working out the difference. Learning how to spot the clues for what's real and what's fake, misleading or a scam online will help your child navigate what they see and read online with confidence.

This activity will help your child spot key clues so they can work out if what they come across online is reliable.

Search 🔍, Check ⚠️, Score ⚖️

Search

1. Sit down together with a tablet or other device and go to your favourite search engine home page.
 2. Check if the safe search feature is turned on.
 3. Pick a topic your child knows/cares a lot about (e.g. football, wildlife, favourite actor) and type it in the search box.
 4. Click on a variety of results, at the top and several pages down.
 5. Look at the points on the below checklist and see if you can spot any clues.
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Check

Does the website have an About page?
Is it clear who the author of the page is? If so, is it someone well-known?
Is it the site of a sponsor or fan (and so maybe mostly positive)?
If the information is negative, can you find out more about the site or source of the criticism?
Is it just one person's opinion/blog or does it seem to be balanced?
If it's a news site, is it a well-known one you feel you can trust? If not you might want to do a search on it to see if people feel it tries to present information in a balanced way.

Score

Give each website a rating out of 3

-  3 = tip-top reliable
 -  2 = best to double check with an adult
 -  1 = I definitely wouldn't rely on this site for information
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Quick guide

Explore the search results with your child and discuss the 'Check' questions to see what clues you can spot. Encourage your child to tell you about websites they would trust. Can they tell you the signs of a reliable website? E.g. Secure websites start with: https:// Check the URL (web address)

Talk to them about bias – see if they can think about the author and what their motives might be. See if they can spot the spelling and grammar mistakes that may indicate an unreliable website.

Now play the **Interland** game together. Visit **Reality River** where things are not always as they seem. Use your best judgment to decide what is fact and what is fiction.

Open a web browser on your desktop or mobile device (e.g., tablet), and visit g.co/RealityRiver