Evaluating websites
These ABCs can help you decide if a website is reliable.

Accuracy
Is the information reliable and high in quality?

✓ Does the author cite specific sources? Are the sources credible?
✓ Can the information be verified in another source?
✓ Are there editors or reviewers?
✓ Are there grammar or spelling errors on the page?

Authority
Who is responsible for the information and the website?

✓ Are the author’s name and credentials included on the website?
✓ Is the author affiliated with a reputable organization, like a university?
✓ Is the information found on a personal webpage? If so, be careful.
✓ What does the domain name (e.g. .edu, .ca) tell you about the source?

Bias
Is the information presented more or less objectively?

✓ Is the information opinion or fact?
✓ Does the author promote one political or religious stance on an issue?
✓ What is the purpose of the page? Is it meant to entertain, inform, or sell?
✓ If there are ads, are they clearly distinguished from the content?

Coverage
Is the topic adequately covered? Is the information what you need?

✓ What information is included? What is excluded?
✓ Is there in-depth or superficial coverage of the topic?
✓ Is there a better source (available in print or through the library's databases) that provides more complete coverage?

Currency
Is the information up to date?

✓ How old is the information?
✓ When was the page last updated or revised?
✓ Does your information need to be up to date? For many topics, currency of information is usually very important?

Visit https://smu.ca/academics/evaluating-internet-resources.html for more information.