

## 5. Evaluating Sources (Focus on Web/News Sources)

If you are teaching students about evaluating sources and would like to focus on web/news sources, refer to:

- Video: Identifying Misinformation
- Video: How to Identify and Debunk Fake News
- Video: News Evaluation Strategies
- Video: Interpreting Images
- Video: Evaluating Statistics

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### **Objectivity in Reporting**

Objective vs. persuasive journalism: Opinion and persuasive examples include accounts, columns, commentary, op-eds, and reviews. Look at word choices, tone, and design.

#### **Website Evaluation**

Discuss the differences among .edu, .com, .gov, .org, etc. Many students take these URL designations for granted and don't understand the importance or usefulness of them.

### ACTIVITIES

#### **Describing a Source**

Either provide a health article citing a study(ies) from a popular news site, such as the BBC or *The New York Times*, or ask students to find one. Direct students to locate the original source of any statistics and identify:

- Who created this information (study authors)
- Where the study originally was published
- The purpose of the study
- The source of the data
- A description of the population
- A description of the sample
- A short definition of the problem
- A short definition of the variables for the statistic reported in the newspaper
- Benchmark variables

- Questions about how the data may be flawed

If time allows, ask the students to find benchmark variables and write an evaluation of the statistic.

### **Evaluating News Sources**

Have your students examine the infographic below and discuss what they see. Discussion questions might include: What do you notice about the funding sources for the new organization described in this infographic? How might revenue sources influence the content of a particular news organization? What, if anything, do you think news organizations can do to minimize bias or influence from funding sources?

Another activity to accompany the infographic would involve asking your students to locate 2 to 3 news reports from the different news organizations on the same topic and compare them, taking into account what they have learned about their funding. Ask them: What, if any, alignment does the angle of the news piece have with a particular point of view? Is the perspective what you expected, given the funding sources? Do you think this source succeeds in being objective? Why or why not?

Click the infographic to open in a new tab, or right-click to save.

(//cdn.credoreference.com/client-7446/edx/faculty-modules/following-the-trail-npr.png)