



Good vs. Bad Online Sources

Created: Oct. 31, 2016

Updated:

Not all information on the internet is credible. Anybody can post anything on the internet and call it fact. Follow these guidelines to help you determine if the information you have found is credible or not.

Good Online Source	Bad Online Source
Author has qualifications, credentials, and connections in the field they are writing about; such as a degree, diploma, has won awards in their field, etc.	Author doesn't have or list any qualifications in the field they are writing about
Contact information. Phone #, address, email	Contact box or no contact information
Website has an "About" page which describes the author, organization, editors, etc.	Website doesn't provide any information on who or what they are
Credible organization (Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, Library and Archives Canada)	Unheard of organization, or organization with a bad reputation
Article has been peer reviewed (often called scholarly or academic articles)	Article has not been peer reviewed. This doesn't always mean the author doesn't have credible information, it just means that the author's authority on the subject has not been evaluated.
Author is being objective	Article/author is biased. They are taking a personal stand on social/political issues, promoting a product or idea, and not being objective. Should be a clear distinction between facts and opinions.
Website is up-to-date, has current news/articles, and has working links	Website has not been updated for a long time, news/articles are old, and links do not work
Article has a complete list of works cited (cited works are from credible and authoritative sources).	Article has no cited works or citing from unreliable sources.

<p>The works cited are a mixture of web based sources as well as print sources</p>	<p>There are no print sources cited. This doesn't mean the information isn't credible, but the presence of print sources indicates more in depth research</p>
<p>The website looks professional and has a trusted domain name: .edu .org .gov (.com and .ca pages can still be credible, but you will have to be a bit more careful when looking at these sources)</p>	<p>Website doesn't look professional, is cluttered, has many grammatical errors, and has a lot of ads.</p>

Good Source Example



1. Contact information

Customer Experience
 Contact Gale's Customer Experience team for help with your post-sales account needs, like order status, billing, invoicing and more.
 Connect with Customer Experience:

- CALL: 1-800-877-4253 TOLL-FREE, option 3. Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. EST.
- E-MAIL: Contact us via e-mail at gale.customerservice@cengage.com for non-urgent and after-hour
- Live Chat: Chat hours of operation: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. EST.



Or, sign in at myaccount.cengage.com to manage your account at any time—update your profile, order p
 subscriptions, track orders, view and print invoices, and more.

Gale Review Copies
 Phone: +1 (800) 877-4253 TOLL-FREE , Option 3
 Monday - Friday, 8 am - 7 pm ET
 Fax: Fill out the Review copy form (.doc, 70KB) and fax to +1 (877) 363-4253
 Email: Fill out the Review Form (.doc, 70KB) and e-mail to compcopy.deskcopy.orders@cengage.com

Technical Support
 Contact Technical Support for issues related to using or accessing online products or services. We're available by phone 24 hours a day at 1-800-877-4253 TOLL-FREE, option 4. You can also contact us via e-mail.

General Inquiries
 Mail: 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan; 48331
 Phone: +1 (800) 877-4253 TOLL-FREE
 Fax: +1 (877) 363-4253 TOLL-FREE

Not only does World History in Context have contact information, but they specify which department can best help you.

2. About

Gale has an “About” page that outlines their goals and vision, as well as, lists their Leadership team.



About Gale

For more than 60 years, Gale, a Cengage company has partnered with libraries around the world to empower the discovery of knowledge and insights by all people, for all purposes.

Knowledge is power, and the act of learning is empowering. Access to knowledge offers learners an opportunity to discover the motivation and inspiration vital to making a positive contribution in not only their own lives, but the rest of the world. That's why Gale provides libraries with original and curated content, as well as the modern research tools that are crucial in connecting libraries to learning, and learners to libraries.

Making Our Mark

 Advocacy Gale is well-known for supporting the mission of libraries and continues to advocate by helping libraries foster higher usage and demonstrate measurable value.	 Technology Gale's product development process enriches world-class information products. With shorter cycle times and an active customer and user feedback process, we are continuously improving our products.	 Scope Gale-created materials along with titles from 120+ notable publishers, thousands of newspapers and journals, and more than 175 million pages of primary sources.
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3. Credible Organization

Gale is well known for providing educational databases that contain scholarly articles and credible sources.



4. Current

Found at the bottom of the “About” page.



5. Author

Mark W. Chavalas
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Chavalas, Mark W.

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Source Citation
Chavalas, Mark W. "The Birth of the State: Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China." *The Historian*, vol. 78, no. 2, 2016, p. 408+. *World History in Context*, ic.galegroup.com/ic/whic/AcademicJournalsDetailsPage/AcademicJournalsDetailsWindow?disableHighlighting=false&displayGroupName=Journals&currPage=&scanId=&query=&prodId=WHIC&search_within_results=&p=WHIC&mode=view&catId=&limiter=&display-query=&displayGroups=&contentModules=&action=e&sortBy=&documentId=GALE%7CA456480622&windowstate=normal&activityType=&failOverType=&commentary=&source=Bookmark&u=albertak12&jsid=bdbd34643f49dfefa9b647245a8d29d1. Accessed 31 Oct. 2016.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A456480622

Author and the university he is affiliated with are clearly shown.

Shows where the original article can be found.

6. Links

All links are working

Overview: The website you're evaluating doesn't have to hit every single point in the chart to be credible. World History in Context doesn't show the works cited to every article, but because we know Gale is a trusted source and they provide the information to where they got the original article, we don't need the works cited.

We can trust World History in Context to give us credible information because they clearly list where their information is from, they have a good reputation, and they list their contact information and Leadership Team which holds them accountable.

Bad Source Example



1. Contact Information



Contact Us

- [Dan Olmsted, Editor](#)
- [Kim Stagliano, Managing Editor](#)
- [Mark Blaxill, Editor-At-Large](#)
- [Anne McElroy Dachel, Media Editor](#)
- [John Stone, UK Editor](#)
- [Kent Heckenlively, Legal Editor](#)
- [Nancy Hokkanen, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Julie Obradovic, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Teresa Conrick, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Katie Wright, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Cathy Jameson, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Natalie Palumbo, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Dan Burns, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Adriana Gamondes, Contributing Editor](#)
- [Tim Welsh, Contributing Editor](#)

This site does have a “Contact Us” page BUT it doesn’t provide an address or phone number. When the links are clicked, you are automatically directed to your email inbox and the emails that the editors have provided are personal.

Recent Comments

- Lindal on Corruption, Dysfunction and Obstruction at the CDC
- Ross on INOCULATED: How Science Lost Its Soul in Autism
- nhokkanen on Best of: The Politics of Pumpkins
- Louise Stanley on Dachel Halloween

2. About

A Letter from the Editor

Welcome to Age of Autism, the Daily Web Newspaper of the Autism Epidemic.

To donate, please either use the yellow PayPal donate button on the right sidebar (no PayPal account required) or send a check to Age of Autism, c/o Olmsted 102 Whittier Circle, Falls Church VA 22046. Thank you.

We are published to give voice to those who believe autism is an environmentally induced illness, that it is treatable, and that children can recover. For the most part, the major media in the United States aren't interested in that point of view, they won't investigate the causes and possible biomedical treatments of autism independently, and they don't listen to the most important people - the parents, many of whom have witnessed autistic regression and medical illness after vaccinations. We do all those things, and more.

We believe that autism is the defining disorder of our age, man-made and therefore preventable, and that it points to the truth about other problems that beset us, from ADD to asthma to Alzheimer's. We address those issues as well, along with exposing the special interests, bureaucratic inertia, and medical malfeasance that perpetuate denial and suffering.

Since beginning in November 2007, we've run hundreds of posts and thousands of reader comments and received millions of hits by people who share our mission. We are here to stay.

We depend on our valued sponsors and advertisers, as well as individual donations.

Thanks for joining us.

1 Comment (0)

Instead of an "About" page, this website has an "Our Mission" page. The first topic discussed is money - wanting your money. This is a HUGE red flag because it shows they are not supported by any well known/trusted organizations. They offer an address for you to send money, but not an address as a way of contacting them.

The rest of the mission statement provides opinion and no factual information. The circled words and phrases indicate that they put heavy emphasis on their point of view rather than scientific facts.

3. Credible Organization

They do not link themselves to any credible organization known for being a trusted source.

4. Citing

Articles do not cite scholarly journals or articles, but cite opinion magazines, newspapers, and sometimes blogs. Their citations are not in proper citation format, but are web links.

5. Authors

Authors' credentials are not mentioned. How do we know the authors' are scientific researchers in autism or just a dog walker with an opinion?

Overview: Although this website is current and has working links, we don't necessarily want to cite it because it is not a scholarly source and is opinion based. Depending on your research, you may want to cite it to show an alternate opinion on the causes of autism, but you would not use it support your scientific research.