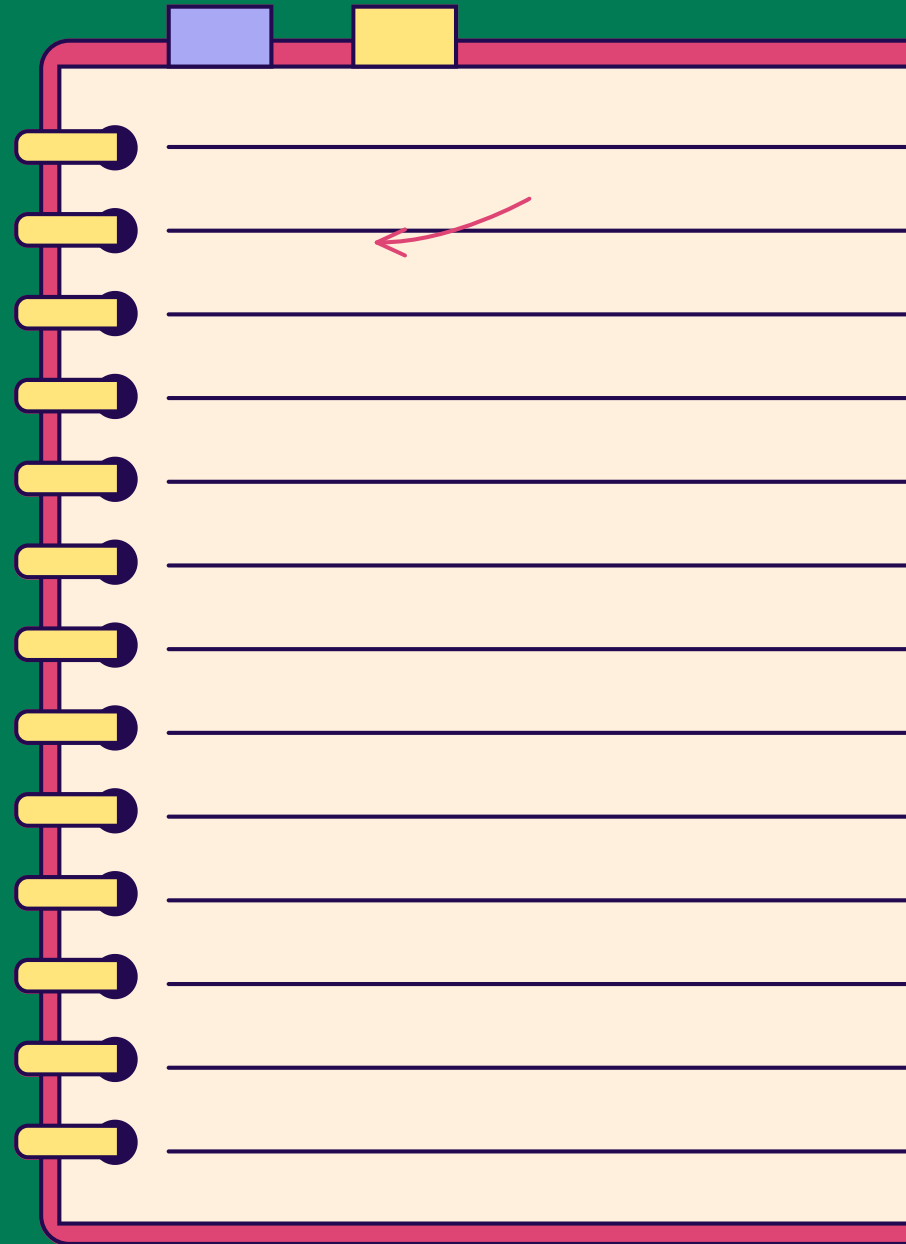


MODULE 3 - INFORMATION PROCESSING

CHAPTER 2

CHECK THE RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION
ON A WEBSITE



INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will focus on websites and identifying their author to see if the site is reliable. Indeed, sometimes very realistic websites are created in order to spread false information or to trap you. Identifying these sites will prevent you from future problems or from participating in the fake news phenomenon.

1 WHAT TO CHECK ON A WEBSITE TO ENSURE ITS RELIABILITY?

SOME SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR



MODULE ALERT

Find out more by following the module dedicated to online scams by clicking here

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN LOOK AT TO VERIFY THE RELIABILITY OF A WEBSITE AND THE INFORMATION IT CONVEYS:

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SITE

Appearance, navigation and content – does the site appear well-built, easy to use and with decent content?

AUTHOR

Identity of the author of the site and his qualifications: is he legitimate? Is he specialized in his subject?

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE SITE

What is the purpose of the website? Does it depend on ministries, scientific journals, NGOs, institutions, or is it a media, a blog, or even a commercial site?

CROSS-REFERENCING INFORMATION

Can the information shared be validated by other sources?

DECRYPTING THE IMAGES

Check the source of an image to contextualize it, pay attention to its construction

2 THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN DETAIL...

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SITE

- Design and navigation: Does the site look professional? Is it well organized and easy to navigate? Is it functional?
- Errors and mistakes: A large number of spelling and grammar mistakes often indicate a lack of credibility of the site, so it is better to be careful.



IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS:

Author Name: You should be able to find the author's name on the site, whether it's at the beginning or end of an article, or on a dedicated page when it's a blog.

Biography: Since the author is identified, you should be able to find information about this person, preferably via other sites.

If there is no identified author or information about the author, be careful!



2 THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN DETAIL...

THE NATURE OF THE SITE

- **Institutional** : When the site has an official web address ending (.belgium, .gov or .edu), the reliability is high, it is an official site!
- **Recognized media** : Recognized media sites are generally reliable, with journalists having to research and validate information before publishing.
- **Blog or commercial site** : Most of these sites will certainly be reliable, but they deserve extra vigilance. Apply the other tips to be sure!

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SITE

- **Inform** : If the site's goal is to present facts and clear sources, then it's reliable! If the content is not based on facts or figures and does not mention its sources, watch out!
- **Attracting clicks** : To do this, authors will use sensationalist, clickbait titles with little factual information and an absence of evidence or sources.

CROSS-REFERENCE THE INFORMATION:

- **Compare with other reliable sources** : If multiple sources confirm the same information, they are probably correct.
- **References and dates** : Articles with good and up-to-date references are more reliable.

2 THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS IN DETAIL...

DECRYPTING THE IMAGES

- **Source verification:**
 - You can use tools like reverse image search (Google Images, TinEye) to check whether these photos were created by artificial intelligence or whether they are a montage or not.
 - Identify the origin and context in which the image was published.
- **Context and construction:**
 - Observe the details: filters, retouching, or manipulations (part of the photo not clear for example)
 - Check if the image corresponds to the event or information it illustrates.



TO REMEMBER

A rigorous evaluation of the structure, author, reliability of the site, and a cross-referencing of information guarantee reliable sources. These simple steps help to distinguish the true from the false in a complex digital world.