

## The Trust Indicators™

One of the best ways to determine whether a news story is accurate is to consider the source. Below are Trust Project Indicators that will help you decide whether you should *trust* your news, and make sure you are aware before you share it.

### **Journalist info:** The journalist is an expert

#### **Why is this important?**

We receive news from other people – we are rarely there to see events in the news for ourselves. So we rely on the journalist to give us accurate information about what happened. It is important for the journalist to base what they say on solid evidence, careful reporting and strict standards.

#### **Questions to Ask:**

*Who made this? Do they have a good professional reputation? Are they reporting on an area they normally focus on?*

### **Labels:** You can see clearly what the purpose is

#### **Why is this important?**

It's important to know the purpose – why this was written – so we can see whether it is affected by bias. For example, if it is an advertisement, or if it was paid for by someone trying to communicate a particular message, then it is supposed to persuade us to have a certain opinion. If it's journalism, it's meant to help us develop our *own* opinions.

#### **Questions to Ask:**

*Why has this been created? Does this have a clear opinion, or is it impartial? Is this sponsored or is it advertising something? Is the purpose clearly indicated?*

### **References:** You can find and access the sources

#### **Why is this important?**

When a journalist is writing a news story, they might use information from lots of places, such as people's personal accounts of what happened or official reports. The places where a journalist gets their information are called sources. When a journalist shows their sources, we can check for ourselves whether they are reliable and accurate.

#### **Questions to Ask**

*What's the source? For investigative, in-depth, or controversial stories, do we have access to the sources behind the claims? Can you find another source to back up what is being said?*

**Local: It has used local knowledge****Why is this important?**

If a journalist knows and lives in the community they are reporting on, they can explain an event or issue more accurately. If they were there and speak to others who were there too, they will get the most up-to-date knowledge and learn how the event has affected people. This all results in a more accurate report about what happened.

**Questions to Ask:**

*Was the reporting done with deep knowledge about the local situation or community? Was the journalist on the scene? Does the story let you know when the news sources are local?*

**Diverse Voices: It brings in diverse perspectives****Why is this important?**

If certain viewpoints or experiences are missing from the news, then we are unlikely to get the full picture. Voices less commonly heard in society due to their race, class, generation, gender, sexual orientation or the region they live in may be left out of the news, so it's important that journalists seek out them out.

**Questions to Ask:**

*What are the newsroom's efforts and commitments to bring in diverse perspectives? Are some communities included only in stereotypical ways, or even completely missing?*

**Actionable Feedback: It allows readers to participate****Why is this important?**

Sometimes the journalist might get it wrong or have an incomplete picture. Allowing the public to give feedback means that journalists can make sure their work is accurate and up-to-date. The public might also help them find important news worth talking about.

**Questions to Ask:**

*Can we participate? Can we give feedback? Does the news site invite and acknowledge contributions from the public?*

**Methods: We can tell the process used to make it****Why is this important?**

Knowing why a journalist chose to research a particular story and how they went about reporting it can help us understand how a news story came together. It might reveal how important, well researched or balanced a story is.



# The Trust Project

## **Questions to Ask:**

*How was it made? How long did it take to make? Who else was involved in the process?*

**Best Practices:** The journalist or news organization shows they care about these Trust Indicators by explaining their policies and standards

## **Why is this important?**

The journalist or organization might have rules they follow to ensure the news they publish is accurate - or they might have no rules at all, even purposefully publishing false news. If a journalist or organization has a set of rules that they stick to in order to make sure they are being accurate, then their news will be more trustworthy.

## **Questions to Ask:**

*Does the journalist or organization have a list of rules that they must follow? Who funds them? What is the organization's mission and priorities? How do they check their facts? Does the journalist or organization make corrections if they are wrong? Do they have a commitment to ethical, diverse and accurate reporting? How do they show they are sticking to the rules?*

## **Congratulations!**

**You are paying close attention to the news you decide to use!**

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