

## Activity 5.3: Online Verification Practice

### 1) Evaluate the Source

Use your checking skills (Wikipedia search, web search) to investigate the reputations of the following sources. Make notes on what you find in the space provided.

Source:	Notes:
<a href="http://www.thebeaverton.com">www.thebeaverton.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian comedy/satire news publication.</li> <li>• May lead to the spread of misinformation – articles have been reported as real news.</li> </ul>
<a href="http://www.thewalrus.ca">www.thewalrus.ca</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian general-interest magazine.</li> <li>• Publishes journalism as well as fiction and poetry.</li> <li>• High level of factual reporting</li> <li>• Opinion articles tend to lean to the left of the political spectrum</li> </ul>
<a href="http://www.edmontonjournal.com">www.edmontonjournal.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily newspaper with circulation of over 90 000.</li> <li>• Reliable source of factual reporting</li> </ul>
<a href="http://www.burrardstreetjournal.com">www.burrardstreetjournal.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver-based satire news website.</li> <li>• The website is clear about being satire, but its articles often get circulated as real news.</li> </ul>
<a href="http://www.naturalnews.com">www.naturalnews.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fabricated news website focusing on health-related conspiracies</li> <li>• Not reliable</li> </ul>

### 2) Find the Original Source

The articles below involve ‘reporting on reporting.’ Find the original source, then evaluate it.

Schools in the UK Are Removing Analog Clocks Because Students Can’t Tell Time

<http://www.odditycentral.com/news/schools-in-the-uk-are-removing-analog-clocks-because-students-cant-tell-time.html>

Original Reporting Source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Telegraph</i></li> </ul>	Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major British newspaper with a wide circulation.</li> <li>• Reliable</li> </ul>
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Bizarre 'Sonic Attack' Symptoms Reportedly Spreading to US Diplomats Around the World

<https://gizmodo.com/bizarre-sonic-attack-symptoms-reportedly-spreading-to-u-1827132459>

<p>Original Reporting Source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Associated Press</li> </ul>	<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major American news agency that gathers reliable, fact-based news reports and sells them to other newspapers to print.</li> <li>Reliable</li> </ul>
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### 3) Investigate the Claim

To see if a claim is accurate, use Google to find reporting on the story. Look for established media sources or fact-checking sites in results.

Claim:	Notes:
<p>Trump ends North Korean talks early after Kim suggests Burger King is better than McDonalds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This claim is not accurate. Students should discover that this headline originally comes from The Burrard Street Journal, a known Canadian satire site. No legitimate news sources report on the story.</li> </ul>
<p>Scientists accidentally invented a mutant plastic-eating enzyme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This claim is accurate. Students should see that a number of reputable news sources, including The Guardian, where the story originated.</li> </ul>
<p>Service Canada banned the words ‘mother’ and ‘father’ to be more gender inclusive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This claim is slightly misleading. If students search this headline, they should find a report on Life Site News. Looking into the source further, students should discover that the site is owned by a socially conservative political lobbyist group.</li> <li>Students should try to locate the original source of the story to verify the facts. Students could either use Google to search for other reports on the story, or they could follow the link in the article to the CBC, the source of the original report.</li> <li>They should find that a number of reliable news sites had, in fact, reported that the Canadian government directed Service Canada staff to use gender-neutral language. However, these reports do not say that any words were explicitly banned or forbidden.</li> <li> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> This story might provide a good opportunity to discuss how different media outlets frame the news. Ask students to consider why, for instance, Life Site News would frame the story as the government “banning” the use of certain words while a report from the CBC wrote that the government “asked employees to use gender-neutral language.”</p> </li> </ul>
<p>Snickers chocolate bar was banned for causing cancer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This claim is not accurate. Students may find a link to an old YouTube video making this false claim. If students look at the news results, though, they will find that the story was fabricated. If they dig even deeper, they will find reports (from BuzzFeed News among others) that Snickers were recalled in 55 countries in 2016 because some bars were found to contain plastic. This 2016 story is the actual source of the misleading video.</li> </ul>

#### 4) Check the Photo

Visit [www.newswise.ca/examples](http://www.newswise.ca/examples) for reverse-image search practice examples. Right click any picture in Chrome, and select 'Search Google for Image' to find out where else a photo has been used.

Image description:	Notes from reverse-image search:
Justin Bieber eating a burrito sideways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A reverse image search should reveal that this image was a prank staged by a group of YouTubers. The image isn't doctored, but the person eating the burrito is a Justin Bieber lookalike, not the real thing.</li><li>• By reverse image searching this image, students may also come across a YouTube video where the pranksters explain how they created the image and helped it go viral.</li></ul>
The frozen Irtysh river in Russia looks like the mask from <i>Scream</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A reverse image search should produce a result from Snopes.com confirming that the image had been manipulated.</li></ul>
A man covered in bees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A reverse image search should reveal a number of reputable sources that confirm that this is a real image of beekeeper Gao Bingguo attempting to set a world record.</li></ul>
The site of an airplane crash, allegedly Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, which crashed on March 10, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A reverse image search should reveal that the image is actually of the crash site of Asiana Airlines Flight 214 from July, 2013.</li></ul> <p><b>Teacher note:</b> While this image of a crash is real, it is not from the event of March 10, 2019. Because old images will often circulate with breaking news, remind students to try to verify the date the image. If they find examples of the image being published before the event in question, it's very likely that the image is being used out of context.</p>