

Finding the *BEST* Information for your studies



INTO® MANCHESTER

- Do **NOT** just use Google and accept the results you find!
- Do **NOT** use Wikipedia as the main source of your information for your studies; you can use it to get an understanding/ overview of the subject but use it **carefully** and check the source of the information that Wikipedia gives.

If you are struggling to find what you need - ask the Learning Centre staff. They like to help!

- You should make use of information that you can trust– that is, information that is reliable and truthful. See inside for how to do this!

Learning Centre Guide 17
Foundation/AE

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Follow
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Make sure you can trust information you have found!

Whether you are using a book, newspaper, magazine or website, **you need to follow the RADAR test!**

Check the following:

R What is the reason for writing the work? R

Is the information produced by an organisation who is trying to sell you something?

Are they trying to get you to believe in a particular viewpoint? (so the information may be biased) What is their “agenda”?



Think about the “style” the information is written in

Are the writers trying to get you to believe in a particular viewpoint? (so the information may be biased) What is their “agenda”?

Think about the language used.

Is it emotive? For example, with newspapers, **tabloid newspapers** often use sensational language, usually about celebrities and sport, often poorly written and with a lack of detail.

Examples of tabloids include: *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *the Metro*, *The Sun*.

Try and use **“broadsheet” newspapers** that use professional journalists and work within professional guidelines. Examples of broadsheets include *The Guardian*, *The Independent* (now online only) and *The Times*

Always ask
for help if
you are stuck!

Has the information been written as a joke/ hoax/ or to steal money?

This can be particularly true of websites as anyone can set up a website; many websites offer no evidence for facts and views; some websites are hoaxes or fiction.

For example, see <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>

A Who wrote the information? Do they have Authority? A

Who is the writer or publisher? Do you trust them?

Does the writer have good subject knowledge?

For example are they a University professor, teacher, politician, business person, writing about a topic in their subject area?

For books, check the back of the book– is there any information there about the author?

Look at the information you have found – think of it as a Court of Law!

Has the author offered any **PROOF** for what they are saying?

Does the piece of work include a reading list or bibliography?

Throughout the article or book, does the writer tell you what works were used to support any findings?

Has the information been “peer-reviewed”? This means the work has been read and judged by other experts to be a valid piece of work.

At University level, you should only be using academic articles that have been scholarly peer-reviewed

For websites: look at the URL to see if it from a source you trust:

Check its web address or URL for clues.

For example: **.ac** or **.edu** at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from an educational institution

.gov at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from a governmental institution

.org at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from a not-for-profit organisation or charity

co. or **.com** or **.net** Can be anything! So you are advised to “Google” the website to see if it has been reported as a fake.

D ***How old is the book/ website? What is the date?*** **D**

You usually need up-to-date information unless it is a classic book on a subject or historical analysis of a topic.

Is the date of the work acceptable for your needs?

A **What clues** can you get from the **appearance** of the work? **A**

Does the information look serious and professional?

Is it written in formal, academic language?

Does it have citations and references?

**Remember:
RADAR test!**

**Reason Authority
Date Appearance
Relevancy**

R ***Is the information relevant (suitable) for your work*** **R**

Does the information found actually match your topic?

For example, if you have been asked to find information about adults, is it **RELEVANT** to be reading information about children? Or if you have been asked for information about Britain, is it **RELEVANT** to be reading information about China or Russia?

Is it at the right-level for your needs? Is it at professor-level (**too hard**) or at child-level (**too easy**) Is the information what you need to make your project stronger



Remember: R.A.D.A.R.

Make life easy for yourself!

Use the special academic databases bought by INTO Manchester....

These special databases cover information **written with authority** by academics, specialists and experts.

All INTO Manchester electronic resources are accessed using the **Open Athens** link on our website

<http://intolearningcentre.co.uk/online-resources/>

Click on the OpenAthens logo

Use your **OpenAthens Username** and **Password** to log in. ***If you do not have a username/ password, come into the Learning Centre and ask staff***

You can pick up guides online and from the Learning Centre to use these INTO Manchester databases effectively and efficiently.

Guides include:

- **Ebsco Databases** (Guide 7a and 7b)
- **The Reviews** (Simple Guides 11 –16)
- **E-Books** (Simple Guide 17 & 18)
- **Issues Online** (Simple Guide 19)

Want more practice on working out if you can trust the information you find? Be like a detective and take the Sherlock Challenge!



Go to **Skills for Success** in Moodle/ MyINTO (go to Learning Centre website at **<http://intolearningcentre.co.uk/>** and click Moodle/ MyINTO link) You should already be enrolled in the Skills for Success module

Look for **Be like a Detective: you can be Sherlock!**