

Name:

Is This a Hoax?



This activity will help you become more familiar with Internet hoax sites. These basic rules will also apply to Internet and social media "viral" hoaxes.

A hoax is defined as "something intended to deceive or defraud" (Dictionary.com). Hoaxes are nothing new, but with the advent of the Internet and social media, hoaxes now take on new forms and can spread more rapidly than ever before.

Sharing a hoax video or article is more than just a time-waster; *it also affects your credibility as a source of information*. Hoaxes, like clickbait, are designed to elicit strong emotional responses from readers/viewers. As a result, they are often shared to shock or outrage others, not to pass on any useful information.

In this activity, you will:

- Learn how to evaluate a website for credibility and trustworthiness
- Learn how to verify website information
- Learn how to analyze the accuracy and legitimacy of images
- Learn how to use links to better the quality of website information

1. Visit the three websites below. Select one, placing the URL on the "Is This a Hoax?" worksheet.

<http://descy.50megs.com/descy/webcred/webcred/dhmo.html>

<http://www.thedogisland.com/>

<http://www.zoobq.com/>

2. Use the worksheet's questions to guide you through an analysis of your chosen website. Answer all applicable questions. If there are no images on the site, skip Section 3.

3. Send your worksheet to the printer.

4. Search the Internet and find *another website that you think is credible and accurate*. Using another worksheet, analyze this website as well.

5. Review your findings.

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Were you correct in your initial evaluation?

If not, what did you miss at first glance that you discovered upon analysis?

What surprised you about the ways a website can be evaluated?

How might you use these evaluation techniques when curating resources for a research or term paper?