

Building Professional Credibility: Using Credible Sources in Your Writing

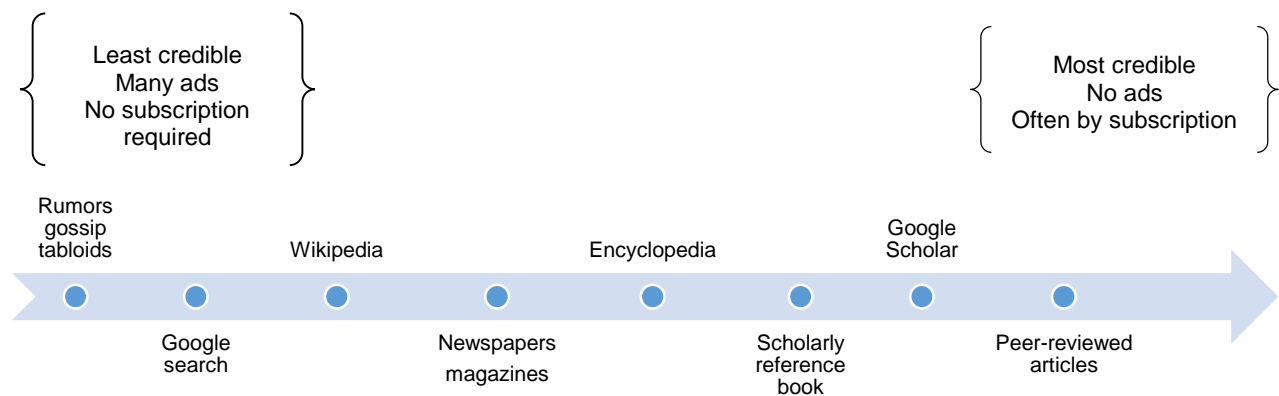
Developing as a professional includes developing the ability to identify and use credible sources to support your argument or research. When we write using credible sources, our audience is more likely to find our argument convincing and to trust us. On the contrary, when we use unreliable sources, we can compromise our credibility. Seeking and using reliable sources is one of the most important professional practices that we can learn in college.

What Is a Credible Source?

To understand which source is credible and which is not, we need to think about our audience, purpose, context, and genre of writing. For example, when we write argumentative or research papers in college, our professors expect us to use sources that have been reviewed by experts, such as empirical or theoretical articles published in peer-reviewed journals. These are often called scholarly sources. Other credible sources appropriate in academic papers include government documents or documents published by professional organizations.

Where Can We Find Credible Sources?

You may find credible sources through your university's library electronic catalog and databases (e.g., Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, ERIC, JSTOR). To access JSU's online database, go to JSU's homepage and click on "library" under the student tab at the top. The link will redirect you to a new page, where you can click on the "article database" link. Sign into library resources using your J number and NetID, and you will be rerouted to a list of databases.



Adapted from "What's a Good Source" in *So What? The Writer's Argument* by Kurt Schick and Laura Schubert, 2014.

You may also use Google Scholar to search for scholarly articles. Reliable publications may also be found on the websites of governmental agencies and professional organizations (e.g., National Institute of Health (NIH)—www.nih.gov; National Association of Social Workers—www.socialworkers.org). Pay attention to the website domain. Websites ending with .gov, .edu, and .org are more reliable than those ending with .com or .net.

What Information to Look for When Using Journal Articles

- ✓ Author's name
- ✓ Year of publication
- ✓ Article title
- ✓ Journal title
- ✓ Volume and issue number
- ✓ Page numbers
- ✓ Digital object identifier (DOI) or uniform resource locator (URL) (if applicable)

How to Cite a Journal Article: APA Style, 7th Edition



How to Evaluate Sources Other Than Journal Articles

If you found sources through a general search online (e.g., magazine or newspaper articles and blog posts), Schick & Schubert (2014) suggest asking the following questions to determine if the sources are reliable:

- Who wrote this? What makes them credible?
- What are the authors trying to achieve?
- How do they support their claims? [For example, do they provide expert opinions or statistical data?]
- Is anyone profiting from this? Who? How might money-making efforts influence the content?
- When was this written?
- Will this still be here next month?

When looking for credible sources, you may also ask your professors and librarians for recommendations.

Source

Schick, K. & L. Schubert. (2014). *So what? The writer's argument*. Oxford University Press.