

The Creator Journalism Trust Framework

Trying to tell which sources of information are trustworthy? Here's a checklist to walk you through it.



GREEN INDICATORS

Meets all criteria
for trust and credibility



YELLOW INDICATORS

Moderate concerns;
further review needed



RED INDICATORS

Significant trust issues
identified

Trustworthy and fair

- **Evidence-based:** Provides original sources, links, citations for content and certifies information for accuracy
- **Distinguishes fact vs. opinion:** Clearly differentiates facts from their own or others' opinions
- **Acts with integrity:** Works to be honest with coverage and upfront about bias, advocacy or personal beliefs
- **Acknowledges uncertainty:** Points out when information is uncertain or outside the scope of understanding

- **Limited sourcing:** Occasionally sources where they get information but not consistently
- **Overlooks knowledge gaps:** Portrays partial information as the whole story, misrepresenting the truth
- **Single sources:** Regularly relies on information from single sources or anecdotes without deeper reporting
- **Editorial blur:** Blends news with opinion without labeling or explaining the difference, or has an agenda or advocates for causes without any disclosure

- **Fabrication/plagiarism:** Shares false information or copies information from sources without attribution
- **Lacks sourcing:** Doesn't say where information comes from or how they verify information
- **Opinion as fact:** Shares opinions but presents them as facts
- **Misinformation:** Repeatedly shares misleading or sensational claims and doesn't publicly correct content or label it as incorrect information

Community-focused

- **Serves community:** Strives to be useful and responsive, providing information that is helpful and relatable
- **Editorial independence:** Makes their purpose clear and aligns day-to-day content with that mission
- **Engages audience:** Engages openly with feedback and questions, frequently responding to the audience
- **Diverse reporting:** Works to present and consider multiple perspectives in sourcing and content
- **Moderates conversation:** Creates a constructive space for users to engage with each other
- **Minimizes harm:** Avoids publishing just to be first and respects the personal privacy of sources and community unless there's clear public interest
- **Inconsistent corrections:** Will correct errors if pressed but lacks clear process for corrections
- **Lacks awareness:** Publishes sensitive details or moves quickly without fully weighing potential harm
- **Lacks moderation:** Uninvolved in the conversations they host and let problematic comments go unchecked
- **Engagement gaps:** Limited response to feedback or comments
- **Toxic practices:** Encourages harassment, spreads hate speech
- **Lacks consideration:** Publishes harmful or private information without clear public interest, context or consideration of consequences.

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Accountable and transparent

- Accountable:** Strives to present the truth, promptly corrects errors and acknowledges conflicts of interest
- Transparent with reporting:** Explains parts of the news gathering process and content decisions
- Transparent with funding:** Discloses funding sources, advertisers, gifts, sponsorships and conflicts of interest
- Editorial independence:** Clear that funders, advertisers or sponsors do not influence content decisions, story selection or reporting
- Professional practices:** Includes an identifiable byline, contact details and bio, along with information about mission and ethics
- Consistent:** Has a record of producing accurate, fair and accountable coverage
- Clear purpose:** Makes their purpose clear and aligns day-to-day content with that mission
- Limited history:** No track record of consistent coverage. (Emerging creators make consistency harder to assess, so instead, look for intent to be accurate and fair)
- Limited transparency:** Does not: disclose background, use byline, provide contact information or get clear about values and ethics
- No accountability:** Lacks a corrections process and deletes content without explanation
- Opaque editorial goals:** Decision-making around coverage is inconsistent or confusing
- Undisclosed funding:** Sources of revenue or financial backing are undisclosed, including gifts, sponsorships and advertisements
- Hidden identity:** Anonymous with no verifiable background
- Unnamed influence:** Funders, advertisers or sponsors shape coverage or reporting decisions without disclosure to audiences
- Inconsistent corrections:** Corrects errors if pressed but lacks clear process for corrections
- Unclear financials:** Doesn't clearly disclose when posts or collaborations are paid or sponsored
- Fuzzy mission:** Unclear about goals behind reporting and motivation behind coverage
- Partial transparency:** Possible input from funders, advertisers or sponsors on topics or story selection, but includes transparent and clear disclosures about this influence



TRUSTING NEWS

