



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

How to Find Trustworthy, Unbiased Information

Information on most topics is widely available through a web search or using an artificial intelligence tool like a digital assistant on a mobile device. While there are many benefits to having quick access to information, it is important to know that a lot of the information you receive may not be reliable.



Knowing if the personal finance information you are given is credible is important because the decisions you make about managing your money can have a big impact on your life. Here are some tips on how to decide if information you receive is trustworthy and unbiased.

When evaluating information, it helps you to know:

- about the person/group giving the information
- the reason/s for them to give the information
- if the information applies to your situation
- and if the information is new or old

Start by learning about the professional background and reputation of the person giving the information. Do they have a license or an academic background focused on this topic? What makes them an expert on this topic?

People and organizations give information for many different reasons. They may want to teach, entertain, or sell items to people. For example, if they earn money if you buy a product then their information may be biased.

Next, you should know if the information applies to your situation. Everyone's personal finances are unique. For example, the best ways for you to pay bills could be different than the best ways for another person to pay bills. With any information you are given, you should think about whether it matches your needs and situation.

If you believe the information matches your needs and situation, the information should also be current. Some financial rules or policies such as the amount you can get for a tax credit or save in a retirement plan can change each year. If the information you are given is old or outdated, then it will not be good for you to follow.



Some resources you can use to find reliable personal finance information are:

- <https://finances.extension.wisc.edu/>
- <https://extension.usu.edu/powerpay/>
- <https://creditsmart.freddiemac.com/>
- <https://www.investor.gov/>
- <https://www.fanniemae.com/education>
- <https://www.mymoney.gov/tribal-and-native-resources>

You can talk about how to find trustworthy and unbiased sources for personal finance information, and other financial topics, with your county's financial educator. Visit <https://counties.extension.wisc.edu/> for more information.