

**BC
CANCER**

**LIBRARY
SERVICES**

Provincial Health Services Authority

***Fact or Fiction :
Finding good
health information
on the Internet***



Agenda

- Health literacy
- Challenges in finding good health information
 - Disinformation/misinformation
 - Social Media
 - Generative AI
- Skills for evaluating information
- BC Cancer Library



Challenges In Finding Good Information

❖ Personal (internal) challenges:

- Mental state (eg. stress, anxiety)
- Physical state (eg. tired, sick)
- Unsolicited advice

❖ External challenges:

- Volume of information
- Complex information
- Inconsistent information
- Rapidly changing information
- Uncertain information
- False information



False Information: Disinformation & Misinformation

Disinformation and **misinformation** refer to information that is not true.



Image by freepik

Disinformation:

false information deliberately created to cause harm

Misinformation:

Misinformation is also false information, but not created with the intention of causing harm

Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2018). Thinking about 'information disorder': Formats of misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information. In C. Iretton & J. Posetti (Eds.), *Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training* (pp. 43-53). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://en.unesco.org/fightfakenews>

False Information & Social Media

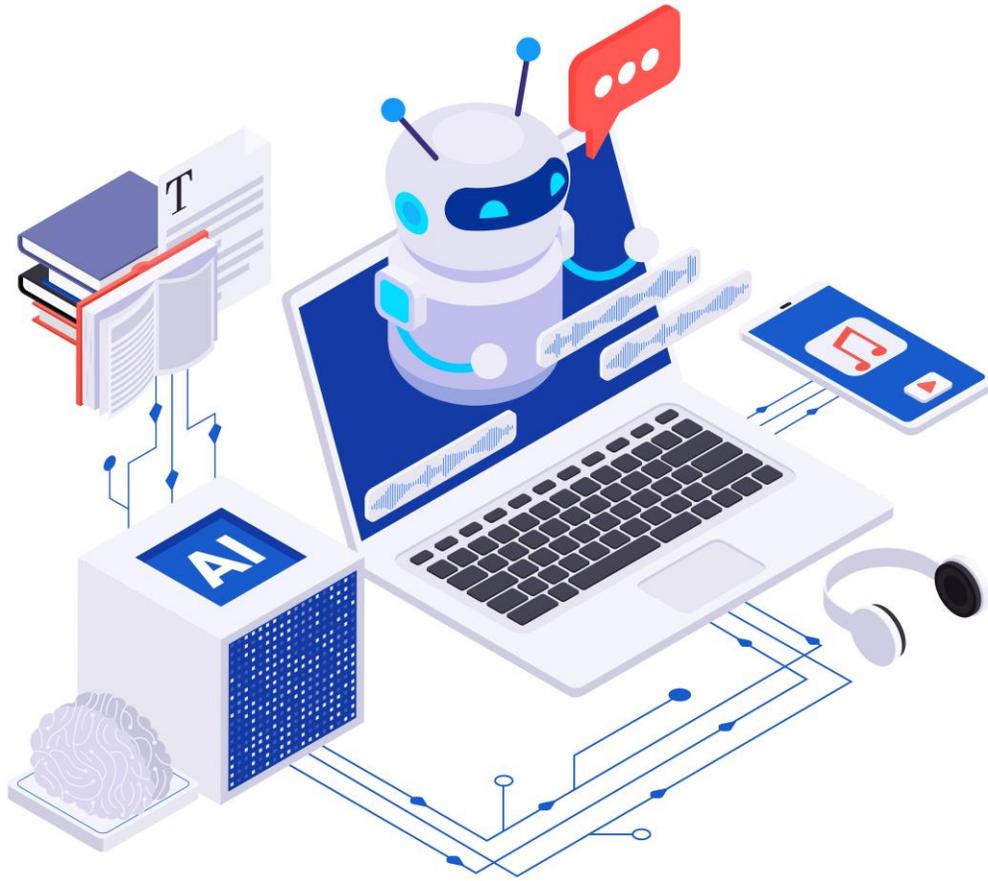
“With social media, it is particularly challenging to assess the source credibility, and users themselves are the self-published, subject to no form of editorial verification or accountability.”

Lab tests show that dandelion root extract kills over 95% of colon cancer cells in just two days, while leaving healthy cells unaffected.

Dandelion weed can boost your immune system and cure cancer

Image by Freepi

Generative AI



- AI systems learn from human data
- Biases in data = biases in outputs
- Sycophancy - AI chatbots tend to adjust their responses to align with the views of the user
- **Tell users what they want to hear**
- **Prioritizes flattery over accuracy**
- **Can generate false or made-up information (hallucinations).**
- May not be up-to-date

Evaluating Information – The CRAP Test

C	Currency: the timeliness of the info
R	Reliability: the reliability and accuracy of the info
A	Authority: the source of the info
P	Purpose: the reason the info exists



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**CHECK FIRST,
SHARE AFTER**

Evaluating online information : C R A P

C Currency: the timeliness of the info

- When was the information published/posted?
- Is there a current copyright date?
- Has the information been updated or revised?
- Is the website well maintained?
- Do the links work?

Evaluating Websites : C R A P

R

Reliability: the reliability and accuracy of the info

- What kind of information is provided?
- Is it supported by evidence? Does it cite studies?
- Can you verify the information from another source?
- Are there spelling mistakes?

Evaluating online information : C R A P

A Authority: the source of the information

- Who is the author, publisher, source or sponsor? Who runs the website?
- Is there contact information?
- Are the authors or editors experts on the subject? Are the authors' credentials or organizational affiliations provided? Does the author's name come up frequently regarding the topic?
- What is the website domain? E.g. .gc.ca, .gov, .edu

Evaluating online information: C R A P

P Purpose: the reason the info exists

- Is the information a fact and intended to teach and supported with evidence? Is the author expressing an opinion? Is it propaganda?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Be aware of bias – who is sponsoring the information?
- Are they trying to sell you something? Are there ads? If so, are they clearly labelled as ads?
- Are they asking for your personal information? Are they clear about how they will use it? Are they asking for you to register to view the site?

Information support for patients & the public



- Books, media, pamphlets
- Postage paid mail-out service
- Information Request form
- Pathfinders
- Librarian reference help

