

Information Literacy 1 Open Course Ware

Answers and feedback sheet Level 3

Exercise 1

Q1 Characteristics of **government information** are:

- **The author works for a government agency** (ministry, council, planning office, etc.)
- It is written for people and businesses who make use of government services, as well as for interested parties in general. In other words: a **wide audience**.
- The purpose is, to **inform citizens about decisions and regulations**, or to disseminate official figures and results of government policies.
- The information is generally **objective**.

Always verify the information from one source against other sources and check the author's reputation!

Q2 Characteristics of **professional literature** are:

- The author is a specialist or a member of a **professional organization**.
- The publication is aimed at colleagues or fellow members of a professional organization.
- The purpose is: **sharing new developments with colleagues** and furthering the author's reputation and career.
- Articles are usually **checked by the editor(s)** of the publication.
- Articles often include **photos** and seldom include formulas and calculations.

Always verify the information from one source against other sources and check the author's reputation!

Q3 Characteristics of **news items** are:

- The author is usually **not an expert on the subject**, but has experience as a journalist.
- They are written for a **wide audience** and want to inform people about current, newsworthy developments.
- There is **no peer review** of the content. Editors will check spelling and grammar (and correct obvious mistakes).
- The **objectivity of the information is not guaranteed**.

Always verify the information from one source against other sources and check the author's reputation!

Q4 Characteristics of **scientific literature** are:

- The **author is a researcher**, usually with an academic title and affiliated to a university or research institute.
- The content is **peer reviewed**: assessed and approved by fellow researchers from the same field.
- The primary audience is fellow researchers.
- It is written to **disseminate research results** and **to** further the author's reputation and career.
- It includes **proper literature references** and a description of the research methodology used.
- The publication is indexed in scientific databases such as *Scopus* and *Web of Science*.

Always verify the information from one source against other sources and check the author's reputation!

Q5 When assessing the reliability of **weblogs, tweets or Facebook** updates, you should look at the following criteria:

- The **reputation of the author** (check the name on the Internet and see if it appears in reliable sources)
- The author's **network** (check some of the names. Are the accounts real?)
- Content: **can the data be confirmed from other sources?**
- Does the author **regularly write about the subject?**
- When was the account created? Watch out with recently created accounts.
- Reuse of information: is the reused information complete, changed, made up?
- Used hyperlinks: are they reliable and do they reflect different points of view?
- Sponsoring: sponsored pages may be less reliable
- Wide variety of subjects (may be less reliable, because the author may be less knowledgeable)

Numbers do not say anything about reliability!

Q6. Match the correct information/publication type to each purpose.

A3, B4, C1, D5, E2

For more information, check [Swanson's table](#) for information types, their audience and their purpose.

Exercise 2

Q1. Choose the right reason for every reference.

A1, B4, C2, D3

- a patent presents specific technical information.
- a website can give useful technical information (if it comes from a professional organization or a governmental institution). But be careful with websites, they can be very unreliable information sources!
- a journal article presents information on scientific research: background, methods, description, results, conclusions.
- a book provides an overview of a subject.