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## 1. Go Directly to the Primary Source

❑ **In the text of the news story, identify the key claim and then attempt to go directly to the source of the data or claim** (Caulfield). The source of the claim should be clearly stated and footnoted with a full citation or enabled with a link that takes the reader directly to the source. The ultimate goal is to get to the primary source of information. For example, if the information is from an interview, attempt to get to the actual transcript or recording of the interview. If an individual is quoted in another source, go directly to the source where the quote originated.

✓ If the source of the claim cannot be identified and/or traced to its origin, treat the news article skeptically. Do a search using four or five of the key terms from the story and see if other publications/websites carry the story. If no one else has carried the story assume it is not credible. If others have carried the story, check those articles for primary sources of claims.

✓ If claims are traceable to a source, the next step is to understand that source and determine its credibility. In procurement, you probably are aware of the major reputable sourcing and business publications. If you run across a site that is not familiar, one technique to use is to perform a domain search to get mentions about the site that aren't from the site itself (Caulfield). For example, for Supply Chain Digest, search:  
*-site:scdigest.com scdigest.com*

❑ **Ask yourself, "Should I continue? Is there risk?"** Applying the above methodology is an efficient first step, and using it provides a higher likelihood of quickly being able to either move forward with the news item, or disqualifying it and moving on. **If the above method of tracing data/claims to the direct source still leaves you uncertain, ask yourself if you should continue.** One step in Sagan's Kit states, "If there's a chain of argument, every link in the chain must work (including the premise) – not just most of them." Look at the news or supplier website and consider if there is a risk of it materializing into the weak or broken chain link that could eventually expose the overall research activity and subsequent intelligence brief as being inaccurate. If you determine it is worth pursuing, start focusing directly on the website or news story itself.

## 2. Focus on the Website or News Story

❑ **On the website in question, check the About Us page.** The information on this page will answer many questions quickly. If a news site is satirical, it will say so on the About or Disclaimer Page. Here is an example from National Report:

*National Report is a news and political satire web publication, which may or may not use real names, often in semi-real or mostly fictitious ways. All news articles contained within National Report are fiction, and presumably fake news. Any resemblance to the truth is purely coincidental. Advice given is NOT to be construed as professional. If you are in need of professional help, please consult a professional. National Report is not intended for children under the age of 18.*

❑ **Check all social media associated with the news site or company's website.** Click on the social media icon links to make sure they have actual accounts and do not link to general pages only. The company's social media pages should have recent activity and complementary information provided on the website.

❑ **Note how the site looks visually.** By just looking at how the site is designed is a clue. Is it professional? Are there spelling and grammar errors? Is the spacing of text uneven and not consistent? Is the writing style the same throughout? Is there a possibility it was machine-generated?

❑ **Avoid the story if any words in the title are all in caps.** This technique is used to evoke emotion from the reader, especially anger.

## 3. Ask Specific Questions

❑ **Does the website list contact information and clearly state who is responsible for the writing and producing of the information?** If so, search the responsible party for negative news or associations with suspect activity.

❑ **Is the website biased to a certain point of view socially, fiscally, politically or otherwise?** If so, understand the bias and take that into consideration when judging the credibility of a story.

❑ **Is the article or news item written by a blogger?** If so, check other articles/posts written by the blogger to get a sense if he or she writes opinion pieces.

❑ **Does the website have sponsors?** If so, is there a logo or an "About" section in the content, making clear that it is sponsored? Is published content impartial and objective?