

Action Plan for Internet Research

These standards are for business researchers to follow to ensure the applicability and veracity of all information that may influence business decisions.

1 Source Quality

- Evaluate all sources, even reputable ones, to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of information.
- Check sources for timeliness and accuracy to ensure the source and author's credibility, motivation, and impartiality.
- Use as many resources as budget and time allow to capture all perspectives on a news event or research topic. This is especially critical if inconsistencies or 'red flags' materialize. Researchers should validate information through independent references or multi-source triangulation. Red flags include outdated information, missing citations or direct links to data claims, grammatical errors, and lack of author/publisher credibility or authority on the subject.
- Get as close to the primary source as possible, especially when citing facts and statistics.
- Read the entire article/content – not just the sentence or paragraph that triggers it as a search result. Always paraphrase or quote sources in the correct context.
- Treat opinions with full evaluative rigor, especially when researching in the areas of innovation and technology development where measured facts are not always available.

2 Resource Transparency

- Clearly cite and/or provide links to all reference data used.
- Do not plagiarize. Fully cite any idea that is not your own, even if it is paraphrased.
- It is more important to cite a source so that the reader can backtrace than it is to cite it 'correctly' in accordance with an established standard such as the Modern Language Association or the Chicago Manual of Style. (This does not apply to academic research.)
- If you are referring to facts from a third party source, it is preferable to quote rather than summarize and then use in-text citations (with hyperlink) or a footnote citation.
- Do not use 'second tier' quotes and citations – if you are using data from a source referred to in an article (and the source has a different author) find a way to access the original source and cite that rather than the secondary source.

3 Results Communication

- Research findings should be communicated efficiently, understanding that the objective is to motivate informed action, not just to inform.
- Provide details on all sources referenced in the creation of a research brief - even those not quoted or cited directly.

4 Research Ethics

- Adhere to all contractual access and licensing privileges.
- Establish confidentiality and intellectual property expectations for the usage and sharing of internal and external information.

