

People with positive Wikipedia attitude better at assessing credibility

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Research conducted by the University of Twente's CTIT research institute shows that people who are negative about Wikipedia are poor at assessing the credibility of articles included in this resource. "They consider all information in this resource to be equally unreliable, meaning they end up missing out on valuable information," says UT researcher Teun Lucassen. People who have a fundamentally positive attitude toward Wikipedia are better able to assess the credibility of specific Wikipedia articles. The results of this study were published in the *Journal of Information Science*.

As the sea of digital information continues to swell, it is becoming increasingly vital to properly assess whether certain information is reliable or not. [Wikipedia](#) is an example of a widely used source of freely available [digital information](#). However, because everybody can add or edit entries in this [online encyclopaedia](#), some of the articles contain inaccuracies or falsehoods. Users must therefore decide for themselves whether the articles in question are reliable or not.

UT researcher Teun Lucassen is studying how people assess the credibility of online information. He frequently focuses on Wikipedia. A new study conducted by him shows that people's trust in Wikipedia plays an important role in their ability to assess the credibility of individual Wikipedia articles. People who are less confident in the resource tend to ascribe a low level of credibility to the articles, regardless of their actual quality. People who do have confidence in Wikipedia are much better able to distinguish between credible and unreliable articles. Teun

Lucassen: "You always need to approach these articles with a critical eye. Still, it's a shame that people with a [negative attitude](#) toward Wikipedia simply discount it wholesale, even the worthwhile articles. Wikipedia can be a valuable source of information, but you should of course always be aware of how the articles come into being."

Research

The study was conducted among 152 subjects from around the world. The subjects were presented with articles of varying quality, then asked to assess the credibility of the articles. Standardized questionnaires were then used to determine the extent to which the respondents generally tend to trust information, and the extent to which they trust information gleaned from the internet, in particular from Wikipedia. The study was conducted by Teun Lucassen and Jan Maarten Schraagen of the Department of Cognitive Psychology and Ergonomics at the CTIT research institute of the University of Twente.

Provided by University of Twente

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