

# SIFT Resource Pack: a method to verify information online



SIFT is a simple, effective method to help patrons evaluate the credibility of online information. Whether verifying a social media post, website, or email, SIFT empowers users to make informed decisions about the information they see online.

## What's inside:

- Introduction
- Incorporating into library services
- Using these resources and tools
  - Resource: SIFT handouts and bookmarks
  - Resource: collection of resources for staff development
- Complementary resources for patrons

## Introduction

This resource pack is designed to help patrons and staff evaluate the credibility of online information using the SIFT method — **Stop**, **Investigate**, **Find**, **Trace**:


- **Stop** and check your emotional response

- Investigate the source
- Find better information about the topic
- Trace a claim back to its original context.

SIFT is a type of lateral reading. Lateral reading is a way to evaluate the credibility of information or source by comparing it to other sources. The acronym SIFT helps library staff and patrons remember the specific set of steps needed to evaluate the information.

By engaging with these resources, patrons will:

- Build confidence in evaluating online information, using SIFT to quickly decide whether a source or claim is trustworthy.
- Develop practical, transferable media literacy skills they can apply to social media posts, websites, news articles, and everyday online content.
- Recognize emotional cues and misinformation tactics, helping them slow down, think critically, and make informed choices in digital environments.

 **Tip:** Pair this pack with examples or workshops from your own library system to make the topic more relevant for your patrons.

## Incorporating into library services

SIFT can easily become part of your library's programming and services. Here are a few ideas to get started:

- **One-on-one help:** Introduce SIFT when assisting patrons with questions about online sources or suspicious claims.
- **Drop-in stations:** Set up a fact-checking station with printed handouts and examples of true and false information.
- **Workshops:** Host a media literacy workshop where patrons practice using SIFT on real-life examples.

## Using these resources and tools

With the tools in this resource pack, you can empower patrons to navigate today's complex online landscape with confidence. Whether through workshops, displays, or one-on-one interactions, SIFT offers an accessible way to build essential media and information literacy skills in your community.

This resource pack includes tools for library staff to learn and teach the SIFT method, making it easy to incorporate into programs or everyday patron interactions. Below, you'll find an overview of each resource and how to use it effectively.

## Resource: SIFT handouts and bookmarks


**Materials:** [SIFT handout pdf](#); [SIFT handout editable pptx](#); [SIFT bookmark and print guide](#); [SIFT notecard](#) and [print guide](#)

**Audience:** Adults and teens

**What it is:** A printable, simplified version of the SIFT Method Webpage for patrons who prefer offline resources.

### How to use it:

- Print and make copies available near public computers or in a media literacy display.
- Distribute during workshops or programs on media literacy.
- Include in new patron welcome kits or other library outreach materials.

 **Tip:** Pair the handout with curated books on critical thinking or media literacy for a cohesive display.

## Resource: collection of resources for staff development

**What it is:** A collection of resources to help library staff deepen their understanding of SIFT and lateral reading.

- [PLA Super Searchers Program](#) Training and toolkit for public librarians on SIFT developed by PLA.
- [Intro to Lateral Reading](#) Lessons and training developed for educators, useful for library staff.
- [What Is Lateral Reading?](#) A detailed overview of lateral reading and its connection to SIFT developed by the Digital Inquiry Group.

### How to use it

- Schedule a staff meeting to explore these resources and practice using SIFT together.
- Assign as optional learning for staff who want to enhance their skills.

- Use the examples to develop future programming or workshops.

**Tip:** Host a staff-led session where team members share insights from these resources and brainstorm ideas for using SIFT in your library.

## Complementary resources for patrons

If you would like to offer complementary programs and resources for patrons to continue building their skills, check out these other resources from EIC.

- More resource packs are available at the [Empowering Informed Communities website](#).
- [Fact-checking video-based social media](#): This teen workshop teaches how to evaluate claims on video-based social media platforms like TikTok.
- [Big 7 Emotions](#): Social media often uses emotions to get users to react or take-action and thus overriding their critical thinking skills. These resources will help teens better identify when and how emotion is being used to influence their behavior.

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