



Lateral Reading: Your Defense Against Online Deception

English Transcript

In the digital age, it's easier than ever to access information. But with so much information available at our fingertips, it's becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between what is true and what is not.

Unfortunately, there's a lot of incorrect or misleading information out there, and sometimes people spread it intentionally. That is called misinformation or disinformation. And it can come in many forms, such as websites, videos or podcasts.

That's where lateral reading comes in. Lateral reading is the act of verifying information and evaluating its credibility by checking multiple sources other than the page or website being read or viewed. Lateral reading is the opposite of reading vertically. Reading vertically is reading down the page, trying to judge its validity from within the article. This strategy can confuse or deceive you.

On the other hand, lateral reading means reading across multiple sites, looking for other sources to help you decide whether to trust the source or not. When we come across an article that catches our attention, we're often tempted to take it at face value, and sometimes, to share it without investigating further. But with lateral reading, we take a step back and consider the bigger picture. We look at other sources and see what they have to say about the same topic.

Here is a site claiming that aromatherapy treatments can cure COVID-19. It's important to know who created the site and why. Knowing where information came from and considering the purpose of the information helps us understand if the information is reliable or not.

Rather than spending a lot of time on the claim itself, with lateral reading, we hone in on the source of the information. What does this organization stand to gain by presenting this information? What is their purpose in presenting this claim?

We can also use search engines or databases to dig deeper into the topic, looking for additional information and perspectives. We fact check the claims made in the article using reliable sources to confirm or debunk them. Use fact-checking websites, such as FactCheck.org, Snopes, or PolitiFact to investigate claims made in the article or information you are examining.

By using lateral reading, we become more informed and better able to discern fact from fiction, or accurate information from misinformation.

<https://osls.org/secondary/learn-to-research/find/find-and-evaluate-your-sources/lateral-reading-video>



So, whether you are gathering information for a school project or to help you make important life decisions, using these lateral reading skills can help you find trustworthy sources and be aware of misinformation. Because in the age of information overload, it's more important than ever to be a critical thinker.

For specific examples and more information about this topic and the entire research process, explore OSLIS. OSLIS -- Learn to Research. Research to Learn.