Determining Credibility for learning resources on-line

The definition of a **credible source** can change depending on the discipline, but in general, for academic writing, **a credible source is one that is unbiased and is backed up with evidence**.
So, as you skim the website, ask yourself the following questions to see if the source is credible:

1. Who is the author of the source?
2. Where was the source published?
3. What information does the source include and what does the source look like?
4. When was the source published or updated?
5. Why did the author create the source?

6. Is the **source** in-depth (more than a page or two)?
7. Does it include an abstract, a reference list, and documented research or data?

Another approach:
Check the URL

1. Personal Pages:

   a. Not always reliable, try to learn more about the author.

   b. URL usually includes the person's name.

      i. If their name isn't the site name, it will likely be in the URL after a tilde or percentage sign.

2. Type of Domain:

   a. The domain type should match the content type:

      i. .com = commercial

      ii. .edu = educational

      iii. .mil = military

      iv. .gov = government

      v. .org = nonprofit

3. Who Published It?

   a. Find the agency or person that published the article

   b. Reliable publisher = reliable content and authors

   c. Look at the first part of the URL between **http://** and **the first /**.

Who Wrote It?

Find out who is accountable for the information.

1. Find the author/organization responsible for the content.
2. Look for a link or About Me/About Us/Background page that will tell you more about them.
3. Look for info on their education and experience.
4. Evaluate what you know about them and decide if you believe they are qualified to write about the topic.

Timeliness

An outdated source is not always credible.

1. Current topics: publishing dates are important.
2. Outdated topics: date should be near the time the content became known.

Check Sources

Look at how sources are cited and what type of source is used.

1. Scholarly content should always have source info and should not be an opinion piece.
2. Check the sources for reliability and workability.
3. If the content is reproduced from another source, go to the original source to ensure it has not been altered.

Links to the Site

Links from other reliable sites shows credibility.

1. If they are the only one linking to the site (from other parts of their site) then it may not be reliable.
2. Find out who is linking to them:
   a. Type the URL into the search box on Alexa.com. Click on "Get Details". Learn about site's traffic info, who is linking to them and other details.
3. Find Related Sites

a. Type the *link* into Google search box. Paste the URL directly after the colon, no spaces. Difference search engines may have different results so try more than one. If you don't see any links, shorten the URL.

Overall Evaluation

Once you have reviewed all of this info, you can decide whether you believe the source to be credible.

1. Since the internet is open to everyone, remember that you may be looking at false info or opinions instead of fact.

2. If you're unsure, go to a reference desk in the library or ask an expert for advice.

References:

https://www.whoishostingthis.com/resources/credible-sources/
https://guides.lib.byu.edu/c.php?g=216340&p=1428399