

# Reliable Sources

Nobody asked but ...

Where do you go to get reliable accounts of news, weather, and sports? I recently surveyed my students in 4 computer literacy classes regarding this information. On reviewing the results, I stressed to them that a “good” source was no better than its reliability, and furthermore its alignment with the **goals of the seeker**. Sources should be tested against reality on a regular basis to determine if they are reliable for the uses to which they are put. My students seemed to prefer local TV channels for a reliable mix of local, state, national, and international news — they also felt that most local stations did not have a hidden agenda. I told them a good place to begin elimination was with any sort of cable news. As far as weather is concerned, the pick was the **Weather Channel’s** web page, but I didn’t get much argument when I suggested that weather was a hit and miss proposition. Recent hurricanes were examples — mainstream weather reporters underestimated Harvey and overhyped Irma. I also saw reports that perhaps the criteria for **adjudging storm severity** were off kilter. Most of the determinants on hurricanes are related to overwater characteristics, but not much overland metrics apart from storm surge. Lastly, there was nearly unanimous selection of **ESPN.com** for sports. People liked the breadth and depth. I can even learn of **rugby** results at ESPN!

— Kilgore Forelle