Research & Analysis / Source Summaries

Assess author authority, publication quality, funding sources, and citation count — with a final trust score.
Difficulty: Intermediate
Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini
Use Case: Literature Review, Fact-Checking, Source Selection
Updated: May 2026
Why This Prompt Exists
A source can be wrong even if it’s published. A source can be right even if it’s obscure. You need a way to tell.

You get:

- citing industry white papers as if they’re peer-reviewed research
- trusting experts outside their domain of expertise
- missing funding conflicts that bias findings
- elevating popular sources over rigorous ones
- no systematic way to decide which source to trust when they disagree

But credibility can be assessed:

- author: credentials, affiliation, track record, domain expertise
- publication: peer review status, reputation, impact factor
- funding: industry sponsorship, government grants, no conflicts
- citations: how often cited, by whom, in what context
- consistency: does this source align with other credible sources?

Without evaluation, you trust based on familiarity, not quality.

This prompt produces a structured credibility assessment and trust score.

The Prompt

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Assume the role of a research librarian who evaluates source credibility.

Your task is to assess a source's trustworthiness across multiple dimensions.

Generate:

1. SOURCE IDENTIFICATION
   - Title, author(s), publication, date, URL/DOI

2. AUTHOR AUTHORITY
   - Credentials: [Degrees, affiliations, relevant expertise]
   - Track record: [Other publications on this topic, citation count]
   - Authority score: [High / Medium / Low]
   - Note if author is outside their domain of expertise

3. PUBLICATION QUALITY
   - Peer review status: [Peer-reviewed / Editorial review / Self-published / Unknown]
   - Publication reputation: [Top-tier journal / Well-regarded / Unknown / Predatory]
   - Quality score: [High / Medium / Low]

4. FUNDING & CONFLICTS
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- Funding source(s): [Industry / Government / Nonprofit / Self / Unknown]
- Potential bias direction: [Favors industry / Favors position / None apparent]
- Conflict score: [Low risk / Medium risk / High risk]

5. CITATION ANALYSIS
- Citation count (if available): [Number]
- Citation context: [Supportive / Mixed / Critical / Unknown]
- Influence score: [High / Medium / Low]

6. OVERALL CREDIBILITY SCORE
- 10 (Gold standard) to 1 (Do not cite)
- One-sentence justification

7. WHEN TO CITE THIS SOURCE
- Best use case
- Use with caution for what claims
- Do not use for what claims

INPUTS:

Source (article, report, or website):
[PASTE OR PROVIDE URL]

Known information about author (optional):
[E.G., "Professor at Stanford, 20 years in field"]

Your field:

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[E.G., "Organizational psychology"]

RULES:
- Flag industry-funded research — it's not automatically invalid, but needs scrutiny
- Distinguish between "cited" and "cited positively"
- Note that citation count favors older papers (age-adjust if possible)
- Be cautious with self-published sources (blogs, LinkedIn, personal websites)
- Remember: credible source ≠ correct source (evaluate claims separately)
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How To Use It

- Run this before citing any source in an important document or presentation.
- Pay attention to funding conflicts — they're the most common source of bias.
- Don't cite low-credibility sources unless you're citing them as examples of bad arguments.
- When two credible sources disagree, dig into methodology, not just credentials.
- Update credibility assessments over time — a source can become more or less credible.

Example Input

Source:
"Blog post: 'Why Remote Work Is a Disaster' by a LinkedIn influencer with 50k followers. No citations. Author's bio: 'CEO of a commercial real estate firm.' Published on company blog. No funding disclosure."

Your field:

“Future of work / HR”

Why It Works
Most people evaluate credibility by gut feeling — “this seems legit” — which is highly unreliable.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- author authority check (who wrote this and why should we care?)
- publication quality review (where was this published?)
- funding conflict detection (who paid for this research?)
- citation analysis (how has the field received this work?)
- explicit trust score (not a vague feeling)
- usage guidance (when to cite, when to avoid)

Great credibility evaluation doesn’t just judge — it tells you how to use the source appropriately.

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