

WHO CAN I TRUST?

Sources of information you can rely on

Most major media outlets follow rules to provide reliable information. Many other information sources, particularly online, are not covered by these rules.

Content you see on TV or hear on radio must meet **broadcasting standards**, which include making sure it's accurate, fair and balanced. The standards also apply to online content that first aired on TV or radio.

If people don't like what they see or hear, they can complain to the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA), which makes sure the rules are followed.

Many big NZ news sources have also signed up to **similar standards** for other online content such as news websites and video on demand, as well as newspapers and magazines. The New Zealand Media Council (NZMC) makes sure these are followed through its complaints procedure.

In the past, many complaints to the BSA were about things like offensive language, sex and violence. Now, accuracy, balance and fairness are by far the most complained about issues – mostly in news and current affairs.

Questions

- Why is this? What could have caused this change?
- What other sources of info do you see online that aren't covered by these rules?
- How can the rules help you decide which sources you can trust when looking for reliable information?

FACT: Accuracy was raised in 58% of the 120 complaints ruled on by the BSA in 2023/24. Four of these were upheld.

COVID-19 brought a surge of **misinformation and disinformation** on health issues, just when reliable information was needed more than ever. The BSA received near-record numbers of complaints about media coverage, with some people misusing information to support their complaints. It found that, in almost all cases, broadcasters covered the crisis correctly and accurately.

Questions

- Should people be free to post anything they want online, or should there be limits?
- Where should the line be drawn, and who should draw it?
- Once posted, web content can be seen all over the world. Should there be global rules for online content?

Learn more



- [BSA quick guide to broadcasting standards](#)
- [List of TV and radio outlets that must meet the standards](#)
- [Quick guide to safe viewing and listening](#)
- [NZMC statement of principles](#)
- [List of media signed up to the principles](#)
- [Government proposals to reform media and the rules they follow](#)