



THE DAIS CHECKLIST

Every entry in the book boils down to a handful of habits. Here they are in order.

BEFORE YOU START: SIFT

A good four-step habit for any claim, developed by researcher Mike Caulfield and widely used in schools and universities:

- **Stop.** Notice your reaction before you share or decide.
- **Investigate the source.** Who is behind it?
- **Find better coverage.** What do other independent sources say?
- **Trace claims to the original.** Quotes, images and studies, back to where they came from.

THE DAIS CHECKLIST

1. The claim

- What exactly is being claimed? Write it in one sentence.
- Is it a fact, an opinion, a prediction or an insinuation?

2. The source

- Who made it? Who is spreading it?
- What expertise, interests and track record do they have?
- Is there a byline, an editor, any accountability?

3. The evidence

- What evidence is offered? Can you find the original?
- Is the quote complete? Is the image what it claims to be?
- Is the statistic representative? What's the baseline?

4. The technique

- Is emotion or urgency doing the work?
- Any whataboutism, straw men, false choices, personal attacks or cherry-picking?

5. The behaviour

- How is it spreading? Organic echo, open campaign, or hidden coordination?
- Any signs of automation, sock puppets or astroturf?

6. The assessment

- What do you know? What do you infer? What don't you know?
- How confident are you? Use the yardstick.
- Who, if anyone, is responsible? On what evidence?

7. The check on yourself

- Would I accept this evidence from someone I disagree with?
- What would change my mind?
- Am I stopping because the evidence is sufficient, or because I like the answer?

Ask the questions in order. Your gut gets a vote, but it doesn't get to count them.

Takeaway: Claim, source, evidence, technique, behaviour, assessment, and then yourself. Every time.